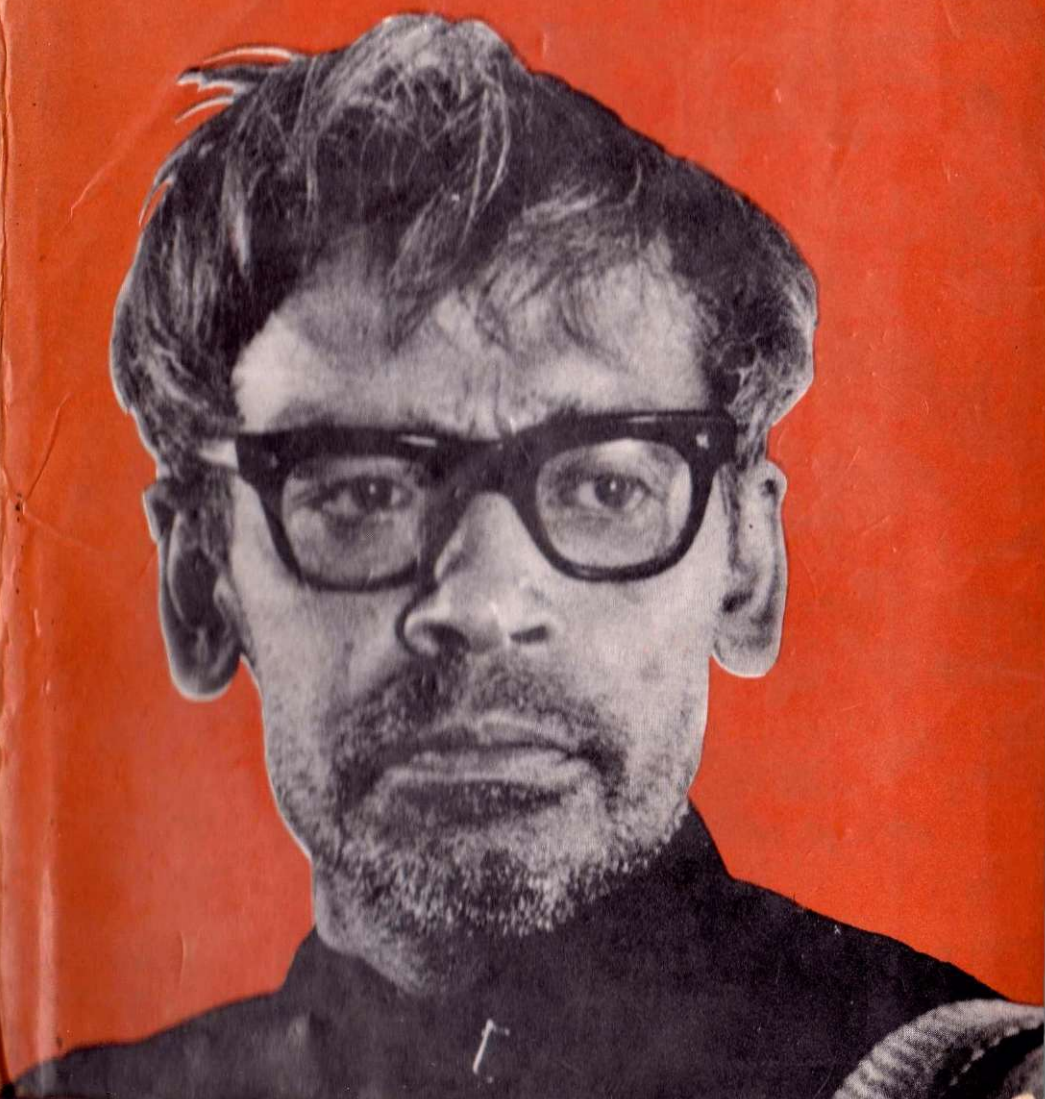


RITWIK GHATAK

Cinema and I



Ritwik Ghatak
Cinema and I

First Published 17th January 1987

Published by
Ritwik Memorial Trust
With support from
Federation of Film Societies of India

© Ritwik Memorial Trust

All rights reserved. No part of this
book may be reprinted or reproduced
or utilized in any form or by any
electronic, mechanical or other means,
now known or hereafter invented.
Including photocopying and recording,
or in any information storage or
retrieval system, without permission
In writing from the publisher.

Cover designed by Satyajit Ray
Cover photograph from Jukti Takko ArGappo

Photo type setting by
Pratikshan Publications Pvt. Ltd
Reproduced by
Quali Photo Process Pvt. Ltd
Printed at

A O P (India) Pvt. Ltd

Distributed exclusively in India by

Rupa & Co

Post Box No. 12333
15 Bankim Chatterjee Street
Calcutta-700 073
Branches:
Allahabad, Bombay, New Delhi,
Bangalore, Madras, Hyderabad.

RITWIK MEMORIAL TRUST
1/10 Prince Golan Mohd Road
Calcutta-700 026

The present volume is the first in the series of publications of
Ritwik Ghatak's works entitled Ritwik Rachana Samagra.

Contents

Publisher's note	9
Acknowledgements	10
Foreword by Satyajit Ray	11
Film and I	13
My Coming into films	19
Bengali Cinema: Literary Influence	21
What Ails Indian Film-Making	26
Some Thoughts on <i>Ajantrik</i>	31
Experimental Cinema	34
Sound in Film	38
Music in Indian Cinema and the Epic Approach	41
Experiment in Cinema and I	44
Documentary: the Most Exciting form of Cinema	46
Cinema and the Subjective Factor	60
Film-Making	65
Interview (1)	68
Interview (2)	77
Nazarin	81
A book review: <i>Theory of Film</i>	84
An Attitude to life and an Attitude to Art	
Appendix	
About Oraons (Chotonagpur)	91
Check-list	105

Publisher's Note

Ritwik Ghatak's creative exercises spanned through many a medium of expression—poetry, short story, play, film. The last was his main preoccupation.

On many occasions he himself admitted that cinema gave him the ultimate satisfaction for creative communication.

Many of his writings which he had left as legacy to posterity provided a graphic picture of his attitude to cinema. Most of these had lain buried in obscure publications.

We have made all possible efforts to unearth his writings on cinema, which are culled in this volume for the benefit of his million admirers. If only these writings help to appreciate his creative efforts better, the Trust will consider itself amply rewarded.

Satyajit Ray
Bagishwar Jha
Surama Ghatak
Sankha Ghosh
Ritaban Ghatak

Acknowledgements

To express mere indebtedness for the spontaneous support which poured from various sources when the Trust planned to publish Ritwik Rachana Samagra, would be too little. Trust considered them as integral part of this venture.

Manuscript help —
Probir Ghosh
Navin Ananda Sen
Ashoke Majumder
Mihir Sengupta

Page layouts —
Somnath Ghosh

Photograph —
Mahendra Kumar

Credit is also due to —
Ajoy Kumar Dey
Sibjiban Pathak
Arup Chattopadhyay
Deb Kukar Sanyal
Priyabrata Deb
Mihir Das
Kanu Basu

Foreword

In a career that spanned over twenty-five years until his death in 1976 at the age of fifty, Ritwik Ghatak left behind him eight feature films and a handful of unfinished fragments. Not a large output if one considers him only as a film-maker. But Ritwik was much more than just that. He was a film teacher, doing a stint as the vice-principal of the Film Institute at Pune; he was a playwright and producer, identifying himself with the Indian People's Theatre movement; he was also a writer of short stories, claiming that he wrote over fifty which were published, the earliest ones being written when he was barely out of his teens. Of these a do/en have been unearthed: the rest lie buried in the pages of obscure literary journals many of which are probably defunct.

What has come as a surprise is the extent to which Ritwik wrote about the cinema. His Bengali articles number well over fifty and cover every possible aspect of the cinema. The present volume brings together his writings on the same subject in English.

Ritwik had the misfortune to be largely ignored by the Bengali film public in his lifetime. Only one of his films, *Meghe Dhaka Tara* (Cloud-capped Star) had been well received. The rest had brief runs, and generally lukewarm reception from professional film critics. This is particularly unfortunate, since Ritwik was one of the few truly original talents in the cinema this country has produced. Nearly all his films are marked by an intensity of feeling coupled with ail imaginative grasp of the technique of film making. As a creator of powerful images in an epic style he was virtually unsurpassed in Indian cinema. He also had full command over the all-important aspect of editing: long passages abound in his films which are strikingly original in the way they are put together. This all the more remarkable when one doesn't notice any influence of other schools of film making on his work. For him Hollywood might not have existed at all.—The occasional echo of classical Soviet cinema is there, but this doesn't prevent him from being in a class by himself.

Ritwik's writings in English on the cinema relate to most aspects of his work. Some deal with his personal attitude to film making; some to the state of the cinema in the country; others are concerned with various aspects of film technique; yet others with his own individual films. When writing about his own works, one gets the impression that Ritwik was anxious to explicate them to his audience. One feels the artist's anxiety not to be misunderstood. He lays particular stress on aspects which are not obvious on the surface: such as what he derived from an early study of Jung—the use of the archetype, the Mother image, and even the concept of rebirth.

Thematically, Ritwik's lifelong obsession was with the tragedy of partition. He himself hailed from what was once East Bengal where he had deep roots. It is rarely that a director dwells so singlemindedly on the same theme. It only serves to underline the depth of his feeling for the subject.

I hope this book which in its totality gives a remarkably coherent self-portrait of the film maker, will serve to heighten interest in his films which, after all, are the repository of all that he believed in as an artist and as a human being.

Film and I

I am coming to Bombay.

Fortunately, my entry into Hindi films is through the kind efforts of a progressive group of film enthusiasts who mean business and with whom I see eye to eye in things of art. They have the requisite background to make our joint venture a significant one. I am really thrilled, the prospects are exciting. With the ample facilities, technical and otherwise, that film-making in Bombay offers, one can really have a go at it.

Pitfalls are there. But let us hope, we shall find ways to get around them and arrive with healthy, clean, wholesome and dramatically gripping filmfare. At least, I am fervently hoping so. It is a turning point with me, you know.

Such a situation naturally leaves one vaguely searching. One *likes* to formulate what one means by his film-making activities. One tries to take stock.

I am doing the same.

I would like to formulate my ideas about film.

Here goes the effort.

Film is, basically, a matter of personal statement.

All arts are, in the final analysis. And film seems to be an art.

Only, film is a collective art. It needs varied and numerous talent.

It does not follow that film is not personal. It may be, at one end, the case of a collective personality, and on the other, may bear the stamp of one individual's temperament upon all the others' creative activities.

To be art, either one or the other must be the case. Any work that lacks style and viewpoint necessarily lacks personality—and thereby ceases to be art.

To my mind, this is the very root of the matter. Some hodge-podge thrown together, stylistically divergent images strung together by the device of intrigue and 'story matter', may be a good evening's entertainment, but no sir, it is not art. Such products abound all around us. One should resign oneself to these sad facts of life. Sometimes one may get great pleasure out of them, but not *artistic* pleasure.

That is why, even such a considerable artist as John Ford becomes considerable only at intervals. The rest of present-day Hollywood, of course, does not count.

I accept that these very 'story matters' and intrigues and howling good situations are raw materials of art. But raw meat is not exactly 'Moghlai kebab'. A cook comes somewhere in between.

A cook, that is, the artist's personality.

The moment the artist enters, things come throbbing to life. From moment to moment, you realize with sudden shocks, that it is your innermost feelings and unnamed emotions that are being given voice to. You, in a word, have a revelation.

That is why the seers of Upanishads are called poets. The poet is the archetype of all artists. Poetry is the art of arts.

The word 'art' in films is much abused, both by its friends and its foes. But probably art is not such a bad thing after all. For instance, whatever is pretentiously dull or breath-takingly spectacular is not necessarily art. Art does not consist merely of ambitious subjects or outlandish propositions or extensive use of a newly available extreme wide-angle lens. It does not consist also of Montage and Manipulation of Filmic Time and de-dramatisation solely. It rather consists of bursts of fancy. Whatever may be the genre, art brings with it the feeling of being in the presence of living truth, always coupled with enjoyment.

Further than this the formulation must not go. Because it will be dangerous to do so. All aesthetic theory tries to comprehend and encompass reality. But all theory is, a priori, less than the sum total of that reality. It is bound to fall far short of its aim. One can have some guides to creative action—no more. Danger comes from this inherent inadequacy. Because the next step in the career of a

theory is its attempt at monolithic unity and formalism. Life being varied, art being numerous in its possible expression, artists being gloriously dissimilar in their temperaments—catholicism is the only possible approach from now onwards.

Because film is just like any other art in its functions, pundits not withstanding. From the point of view of final consummation, the Tenth Muse is no mysterious maiden. She cannot, stand straight-jacketing, just as other arts cannot.

This is the reason why, even the brilliant Dr. Sigfried Kracauer goes astray when he tries to impose his theory of 'Redemption of Physical Reality' on to all films. Hitchcock, to him, becomes a major and significant artist and Olivier's *Hamlet* no film at all. The same happens to Parker Tyler, when he tries to read exclusively and intrinsically literary connotations out of all the films, in spite of his eminently valid 'Cult of Displaced Laughter'.

Film is not a form, it has forms. Nobody denies the special privileges of Cine-Camera, but one should not approach the issue from that side at all—one should approach it from the point of view of the emotions aroused and intellects sharpened by one's end-product: the result that accrues, after all, you create 'for' the people.

That is why all the forms, from utter naturalism to extreme expressionism, seem to me to be totally valid—if your thesis and temperament demand it. Here I am reminded of Tagore. With his vividly plastic imagination, Tagore hits the mark. One feels so grateful to him. He faced parallel problems in his own sphere and solved them in his inimitable way. Though Mr. Eric Rhode, the 'Sight & Sound' reviewer of Ray's 'Teen Kanva', calls him just a formidable Guru, his was a truly transcendental vision, far outreaching all the film-makers of the world.

And what about Chaplin, who cuts across all theories?

I believe in committed cinema.

I mean, committed in the broadest sense of the term.

To me, the great Indian example is *Pather Panchali*. Because of its truth, its sense of beauty, its bursts of visual ecstasy and of mental passion. I know I am being a bit old-fashioned, but there it is.

Satyajit Ray, and only Satyajit Ray in India, in his more inspired moments, can make us breathtakingly aware of truth, the

individual, private truth. The indir Thakurun' sequences of that film remains to me the highest and noblest expression of art in Indian films.

Somehow, Satvajit has achieved a link with contemporary reality in those moments.

Committed is to that contemporary reality, to the daily acts of heroism in that reality. No important work can be created without this commitment, I think. I am quite aware that this reality and this heroism can be aimed at from the vantage points of past and future. That is also exciting, to approach this India through a story of, say, the India of Primitive Buddhism.

Because this commitment presupposes a desire for change in that reality.

I am also aware that there are so-called 'eternal' elements in art, eternal only from the point of view of a human existence. That is the cosmic element. As playwright Ernst Toller expressed it in one of his prefaces, it is 'The Silence of the Universe' element. But it always appears in contemporary relationships, in the things of the moment. No serious artist will ever deny the position of this 'eternal' in the creations of man.

I have been experimenting on in my films. These were the thoughts behind them. To me, all my films are just completed exercises, I cannot have any opinion about them. But when I hear, for instance, that the non-realistic cry of a consumptive girl—'I want to live'—just when she is at the point of death, is horribly forced in the context, I truly wonder. I feel I have not been able to convey the entire allegorical connection of Uma—the wife of the Lord of Destruction, who is the archetype of all daughters and brides of all Bengalee households for centuries—with the protagonist. Or for instance, when I hear that I am guilty of expressionism in my latest film, and that expressionism and symbolism do not go hand in hand with reality, I try to think out, then what are the things on which expressionism thrives? To me, it is precisely contemporary reality, with its innumerable and unwieldy patterns and crosscurrents of forces, that needs abstraction, if I set myself the task of propounding certain fundamental traits of that reality. I think much in modern art and literature and painting have to be thrown out if we do not accept this position.

Picasso and Jamini Roy, for instance, will cease to exist.

This sort of theorisation has exasperated people like Marcel Proust who declared film cannot be an art. He is the antithesis of Dr. Kracauer.

This line of thinking one can understand, of course, under the shadow of the bomb. Western civilization is in the pangs of death. These are but expressions, in films, of that crisis. When learned men start abusing any abstraction, and blaming science which is born of such abstractions for contaminating the minds of men, one is reminded of the 18th and 19th century yearning for the Noble Savage. This pathetic clinging to the superficial can make one feel merciful, but not partisan.

Trying to crawl back to the origins of cinema and exalting the Still Camera plus Motion formula are ludicrous attempts. As ludicrous, say, as trying to go back Dionysiac orgies and satyric mimes and masks of Thespis will be today in matters of the stage. The same can be resolved with a sense of the contemporary, of course, but in a synthesis on a higher level, such as *Strange Interlude* of O'Neil or Strindberg's *Dream Play*, or more aptly in Brecht's experimentation. *Organon* remains the most brilliant attempt at such a synthesis.

And that is precisely what is happening in the hands of all the masters of cinema, from Flaherty down to Fellini and Antonioni.

My first film was called a Picaresque episodic film along the lines of 18th century Spanish novel *Gil Bias De Santillane*, the second was called a film of documentary approach, the next was a melodrama, and the fourth, nothing at all, just no film.

To my mind, I am only groping. Groping to find the most proper expression for the theme at hand. Sometimes I may have connected, sometimes gone wide off the mark. I have tried to experiment with forms of story, treatment, styles of taking, images etc. Each one of my films is quite different from the others, though I fear my personality and inclinations are in all of them. From the compositional point of view, all the films have divergent balancing principles thought to be inherent in the theme. In the sound tracks, including the music. I have tried to weave different patterns.

It is the nuances I am after, the elusive, fleeting nuances. They contain the life-spark.

Any story is good material if it contains the scope for those

nuances, even the songs and dances are not loads around your neck. They are creative elements with tremendous potentials, if the theme and approach calls for them.

There are so many genres. One accepts melodrama as one. I do not believe in the film's privileges being turned into dogma (à la Dr. Kracauer). I do not abhor abstraction, scientific or otherwise. I believe in organizing my filmic elements, even if one wants to catch and portray the very flow of life itself.

I do feel a quickening of heart when the camera shows the instantaneous, the casual, the proverbial ripples in the water, the everyday glory of a sunset, or an involuntary twitching of a painstricken face. But I do not know out of hand the passions of an Othello or a drunken clown's tirade about life to a ballerina who is sick at heart.

I think a truly national cinema will emerge from the much abused form of melodrama when truly serious and considerate artists will bring the pressure of their entire intellect upon it.

After all Mizoguchi and Kurosawa and Kinugasa took the *Noh* and *Kabuki* in their hands and squeezed supremely personal statements out of them.

The prospect is exciting, is it not?

My Coming into Films

Initially, I was a writer. I have written about a hundred short stories and two novels at the beginning of my career, from way back in 1943 onwards. I was always perturbed seeing the situations around me of the then Bengal.

I then felt that, though literature is a terrific medium, it works slowly into the minds of the people. Somehow, I felt, there is an inadequacy in the medium. To start with, it is remote at the same time, limited to a very small readership, serious literature being what it is.

Then came a revolution in our Bengal of that time. Came a new wave of dramatic literature led by Shri Bijan Bhattacharya of Nabanna fame. It revolutionised our way of thinking. I found that this was a much more potent medium than literature and also most immediate. So I started writing plays, acted in them, directed them and did all other incidental things around a show. I became very much associated with Indian People's Theatre Association, in a nutshell, IPTA.

I and our colleagues roamed extensively all over the place and tried to rouse our people against the ills which are eating at the vitals of our society. I have played and acted before an audience of ten thousand persons also.

But I found it was also an inadequate medium. Then I realized that to say your say to-day, the film is the only medium. It can reach millions of people at one time itself which no other medium is capable of reaching.

Then I came into films. My coming to films has nothing to do

with making money. Rather it is out of a volition for expressing my pangs and agonies about my suffering people. That is why I have come to cinema. I do not believe in 'entertainment' as they say it or slogan mongering. Rather I believe in thinking deeply of the universe, the world at large, the international situations, my country and finally my own people. I make films for them. I may be a failure. That is for the people to judge..

Because all art work involves two parties. One is the giver, the other is the taker. In the case of cinema, when an audience starts seeing a film, they also create. I do not know whether it will be intelligible within this little span of a little article. But I know it for certain. A film maker throws up certain ideas, it is the audience who fulfils it. Then only it becomes a total whole.

Film going is a kind of ritual. When the lights go out, the screens takes over. Then the audience increasingly become one. It is a community feeling, one can compare it with going to a church or a inasjid or a temple.

If a film maker can create that kind of mentality in his audience, he is a great one—such as Eisenstein. Pudovkin. Bunuel, Mizoguchi, Ozu, Fellini, Satyajit Ray, Cacoyannis, Kozinstev, John Ford and others. I do not know whether I belong to their category, but I try.

Bengali Cinema: Literary Influence

Today the Bengali novel is, in my opinion, in a moribund condition. From among the thousands of books that have come out in the last twenty years, I cannot remember more than five or six that are worth mentioning. The rest have obviously been written with filming in view. They are notably conspicuous for their crassness and lack of sincerity.

The relationship between the cinema and the novel has now become a two-way affair. Literature is cramming in all kinds of cinema clichés and stock situations which authors think will endear them to film producers. And films are based on such stuff, thereby giving a further fillip to such writing.

The result: the growth of banality and vulgarity in literature and cinema. Both are boring and slow and packed with sentimental stuff. They harp endlessly on certain family relationships and complications which are nonexistent in reality. They mouth the same kind of pedestrian morality. They strike poses which are patently false, and even insulting to the intellect.

This was not the case with literature in the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. Authors then wrote because they had an urge to express some inwardly-felt truth with honesty and sincerity. Bengal achieved at that time a literature of truly imposing stature. This was so up to the last war. Today's pedlars were unknown at that time. There was dedication, passion for truth and beauty, and a sense of responsibility.

Naturally, when cinema came to Bengal, it was instantly under the influence of this great body of work. From the very beginning

cinema drew lavishly from the great novels and considered it an honour and a privilege to do so.

This gave Bengali cinema a goal and a direction. It was a positive gain.

Decay of literature

However, literature soon started decaying. Yet we clung to it. The more serious among us started looking into the past for exciting filmic material. All the great novels talked of a Bengal of at least 40 years ago. The result was, we lost contact with present-day Bengal. The throbbing reality around us was completely by-passed. Writers like Sarat Chatterjee became our guardian angels. And that tradition is still going strong.

Here we must take into account a cardinal factor—the question of audience. From its very birth, Bengali Cinema has been a middle-class affair. To start with, the Bengali working class, as a class, is of very recent origin. And all Bengali films, even today, are patronised largely by the middle class.

This class indelibly imposed its philosophy and taste on cinema. If I may say so, weeping is one of the pleasures of people from the middle class. They like to have a good cry. They seem to derive some kind of pleasure from such crying. No one knows better than Sarat Chatterjee the sure film formula that invariably tugs at their heart strings. These people want bold words, always shrink from a really bold social solution. A family entanglement, with preferable a female protagonist who suffers and eventually wins, has a tremendous fascination for them.

So, our film makers seek and film such works. This goody-goody middle-class way of thinking still keeps our film makers in shackles. Film making is, by and large, merely photographed story-telling. Technique is of the crudest kind. Any plastic possibility that the film medium may have is not taken into account.

Of course, even in the olden days, there were some exceptions to formula film making. The name of P.C. Barooah comes to mind. Here was a man who, in the late thirties, sometimes explored the potentialities of this plastic medium. His *Grihadaha*, marks some of the earliest successful and significant transitions in films. In his Uttarayan, he utilised the subjective camera to telling effect. Surrounded by mediocrity, he sometimes gave off sparks of pure

cinema. Though, in the ultimate analysis, he remained a product of his milieu.

The root cause of the poor state of cinema was the utter reliance on novels of different levels in quality. That is why, in my opinion, literature was an evil influence on Bengali cinema. This influence did not allow the film to come of age. Our audiences were smugly happy in their ignorance and complacency.

This condition prevailed until some years ago. In the early fifties came the break. Some groups of young intellectuals started considering cinema as a serious art-form. This way of thinking gathered momentum slowly and culminated in Pather *Panchali* and the emergence of Satyajit Ray. It is true that this film was also based on a famous novel. But for the first time the story was narrated in the filmic idiom. The language was sound. Artistic truth was upheld. The fundamental difference between two art-forms was delineated.

From that time the trend towards serious film making has been apparent in Bengali cinema, though the old school did carry on happily. Unfortunately, both schools leaned heavily on literature.

Why unfortunate? Because, the serious film makers, in their search for truly great works, had to turn to the past to find something worthy of serious attention. The contemporary was banished even from their work. But can cinema fulfil its function without looking at its surroundings? It cannot and has never been able to. Let us forget those celluloid storytellers, they are not film men. But even the persons who know what cinema is, and what to do with it, are at the cross-roads. On the one hand, they have to crawl back to an earlier era, an era which does not exist any more, for truthful material. This makes their films remote from life as it is lived today. On the other hand, these men display a servility to literature which is, to say the least, not filmic. How many great films are being made out of material from different medium? It is the original vision and expression that are wanted. And mighty few of our works belong to that category.

If we look around the world, we will see that modern cinema is largely born out of original material. Also, that literature is on the decline. Cinema is increasingly becoming aware of its own power to express that which is inexpressible in any other medium.

When I consider all this, Bengali cinema presents a gloomy picture indeed. Yet, I find a false sense of superiority, an

unjustified pride in our cinema. This attitude is eating at the very roots of the cinema in Bengal.

The Mission of Cinema

Cinema cannot but be engaged, committed, to be worthy of its mission. That is exactly what our cinema is not in the broad sense of the term. It does not portray the burning reality around us.

What is the mission of cinema? I do not mean the approach of some film makers, operating both in Bengal and elsewhere, which is uninformed, foolish and sly. They pounce and peddle long-winded words about big ideals and any recent national calamity, grafting this so-called purposeful talk on to age-old formula films. I mean the awareness, the sense of reaction of a truthful artiste to the small things of life—literature today has abandoned this approach completely, and seems to have no intention of resuming it. Our cinema is toeing the line.

From the foregoing let it not be thought that I reject out of hand all films and all literature being turned out today. There are happy instances, even today, of truthful films based on novels, and our literature is not all dead. But it is a question of proportion, to my mind. And that proportion is becoming alarming to me. Although the influence of literature on cinema brings many positive gains, these gains are being neutralised by other factors not so desirable.

It may be true that, considering the state of film making in other parts of India, Bengali cinema presents coherent, consistent and logical fare, but that is not enough. Moreover, I consider cinema to be something international and, in that context, these shortcomings loom very large. We have to catch up with the best of world cinema.

There are heart-warming and welcome signs all round in Bengal. Large sections of Bengali audiences are sitting up and taking notice. They are being aroused. They are clamouring for the presentation of reality in cinema. Scores of film societies are springing up all over. They are organizing audience-thinking and reaction, educating the intelligentsia in film appreciation.

Seeing this rapid growth. I am reminded of things as they were many years ago. College students liked to join a literary circle and become poets. Today they join a film society.

Because, in Bengal, cinema has become the vanguard of culture in place of literature. The youth, the student, the white-collar

worker—they are all yearning for true cinema, committed cinema, pure cinema from our film makers. They want no more of those re-hashed stories and novels which speak of days gone by.

They deserve it!

What Ails Indian Film-Making

Even after an experience of over half a century and an enormous output from year to year, film-making in India is still a gamble. This is quite true. Although we have produced ace directors and film technicians who can match in excellence the top-ranking in calibre the world over. It is a pity that our financial roots are still unsteady.

In my opinion the gamble is in the nature of things as they exist in our country. Looking from a commercial point of view, our film business is totally dependent upon the exhibition trade. But the exhibitors never gamble. They just make a cinema hall, and they are not only guaranteed the value of their investments but they are guaranteed even a huge amount of profit. It is quite strange that in this one business, the state allows them to reap guaranteed profits. It is also worth noting that there is no credit system in the show business. All the exhibitors' earnings are in spot cash. And they never, or very rarely, re-invest money into the film business. Especially this is true of Bengal. It appears that theirs is a case of a cistern with a leak. Whatever finance comes into the industry is leaked out through the exhibitor's cistern, never to return, and thus earnings of the business are never ploughed back into this **business.**

From an economist's point of view, this is the state of affairs, and obviously this is at the root of all the chronic ills with which the film industry in India is suffering. Black money, the star system, uncertainty of getting back revenue etc. are just complications of the super-structure the roots of all of which can

be traced to this particular practice of business now being pursued in the exhibition trade.

Nationalise Exhibition Trade

Nationalisation of the exhibition trade is in the order of the day.

I concede that this is an issue which will need thorough airing and discussions bolstered up by relevant data, but this is also a fact that attention has never been drawn to this basic ill of the industry. Instead, remedies in the nature of construction of new theatres, proliferation of utility theatres all over the country and discouraging erection of luxury theatres etc. have been suggested from time to time. But none of such remedies touches the roots of the malady. At best they can offer fringe benefits, and even then there is a possibility that, if one does not touch the vested interests they will give rise to another racket. The vested interests are on the other hand engineering the moral decay of our youth, and glamour is a most potent weapon in their hands. Glamour is inherent in the star system, and carries such a strong impact on the susceptibilities of our youth that they are maddened by a desire to become stars, neglecting all urges to pursue a wide variety of other useful vocation through which they could not only become useful members of society but also could reach eminence by an extraordinary display of talents. The star system with its glamour is thus proving to be a bane of our society. It can be eradicated only if we educate our film makers and encourage them to make worthwhile movies, by showing that such films also can pay. Simultaneously we must also educate the masses by affording them the opportunity to experience really good movies of the world. But the success of the efforts will again depend on how far we are able to tackle the fundamentally unsound and immoral mode of exhibition in our country.

Good P'films

My own experience in making good films which may also pay has taught me that I am in a racket. It sometimes rouses me to fight for a crusade. But I think that even in the present set-up one **can** make worthwhile films and still make them pay their way. I say this on the strength of my own experience. At the same time the example of so many other great film makers is before me. There is another development which should not go unnoticed. Recently,

some of the big-budget films of Bombay have badly flopped. It indicates that a formula film with huge finances pumped in is no more a guaranteed success at the box-office.

People are changing. Things are changing. Times are changing. If you go on showing some kind of trash ad infinitum, there is a limit after which people will not go with you. Besides this, people are having experiences in their own lives and they cannot be satisfied with the old hash for long now. So either, one should get rid of set formula of hoodwinking the people, which is extremely difficult for unimaginative producers and risky too, or one should come clean, striking harmonious chord with contemporary urges, which can only be done by really creative and conscious artistes.

There are so many standpoints and theories hovering around us about what should be called a worthwhile movie that one simply feels bewildered. I am no critic. I have no panacea for all the evils that beset a serious film maker, nor do I have the answer to all the pet questions. I can only speak of myself rather than put forward a well-computed guideline.

Art Related to Man

In my opinion, everything in this world is relative. One may take it as in my statement, or as Einstein put it in scientific terms. So all art should be relative to something. In my thinking, that something is man. For art cannot operate in a void. In our case it is the Indian man and his environment which should be the focus of our attention. It is with this standpoint that I judge not only cinema but all works of art. That which helps man is valid, that which does not is not valid however much trappings it may have. At the same time, I am not a supporter of slogans. That will be an infantile disorder in my opinion.

Cheap slogan-mongering or talking of big and high-flown principles will not make art. Art needs meditation, deep penetration, humility, awareness of the magnitude of the task and a total feeling of oneness with the problems at hand. All great art has these in abundance,

It is often argued whether an artist should just pose a problem and leave it at that or he should also indicate a solution. I think that this a very immature way of looking at things. If the artist feels the urge of putting forward a solution, he is welcome to it. But more often, he poses a problem and leaves the matter there. Both

these treatments are equally important. We cannot mechanically dub one as the optimistic and the other as the pessimistic. The moot point is—that which grows naturally out of the material and out of the mind of the maker is completely acceptable, but whatever emerges must come spontaneously. The question is whether the artist is partisan to life and man or not. If he is, the problem never occurs at all.

Good cinema cannot be divorced from life. It must represent the throbs and the aspirations of the people. It must move in step with the times. It must have its roots in the people. The Bombay cinema in my view has no roots. It must be admitted that India has different cultures. This country is yet far from being integrated in that sense. Cinema can be serious only if it conforms to certain social conditions that the audiences are familiar with. I think the Bengali cinema is such. Marathi cinema too has a chance to be serious on this score.

I am sure that films produced with low budgets do have a future, in India, provided, of course, that they are good films related to life. We have the instance of Mrinal Sen's *Bhuvan Shome*. He has made a Hindi film aimed at the responsible minority of the whole country, and he has shown that a good film cannot only produced with a low budget but also that it can commercially succeed. Such attempts should be hailed. If more and more people come out with such ideas, they can give rise to a very vigorous trend in Indian film-making.

Colour in Films

Though the use of colour by itself cannot be called extravagant, in our country it is so only because it is used in our films without much thought. There are subjects that cannot be expressed except by colour. It should also not be forgotten that our people are a colourful people. Our folk art, our puranas are all very colourful. It is only a matter of using colour where necessary and not just steeping a subject in gaudy colours without rhyme or reason.

Young Talent

There is no dearth of young talent in our country. More and more are coming up with the right urge and aptitude. I know that some boys trained at the Film Institute, Poona, have tremendous possibilities. But they need encouragement. It is a sail story that

while the Film Finance Corporation can advance about 60 lakhs of rupees to veterans, it does not advance even one lakh for experimental films to young talent. I am Sorry to observe that this Corporation has become just a stronghold to encourage black money. If finances at its disposal are utilised properly, it is certain that young talent can take up the challenge of serious film-making in our country.

While the state should not hesitate to nationalise the exhibition trade,⁷ it may leave the field of production and distribution without meddling with them. Any attempt at curbing the initiative of the artist through whatever means and on whatever pretexts will only spell disaster to a free development of good cinema in our country.

Some Thoughts on Ajantrik

For twelve long years, I had thought about this story before I made it into a film. When it first came my way, accidentally, I was a green boy, newly come to Calcutta and fresh from the university. *Ajantrik*, caught my imagination and held it for ten days at a stretch—for more reason than the alliteration with my name.

I thought about it for a long time in a vague and general sort of way. Never concretely. What struck me most was its philosophical implication. Here was a story which sought to establish a new relationship in our literature—the very significant and inevitable relationship between man and machine.

Our literature, in fact our culture itself (i.e. the culture of middle class city-dwellers) has never cared very much for the machine age. The idea of the machine has always had an association of monstrosity for us. It devours all that is good, all that is contemplative and spiritual. It is something that is alien to the spirit of our culture—the spirit of ancient, venerable India. It stands for clash and clangour, for swift, destructive change, for fermenting discontent.

I am not a sociologist. I cannot explain the phenomenon. This apathy may be due to the fact that all change and the very introduction of the machine age was the handiwork of foreign overlords. It might have more comprehensive causes, encompassing all the pangs of Western civilization. But the end-product of all these causes seems to be an ideological streak which is doing immense harm in all practical spheres of life.

This attitude is hardly compatible with the objective truth as it

obtains in present-day India. Or in our future, for the matter. With all our newly achieved technology, we have yet to find ways of integrating the future into our heritage, what is on the order of the day is an emotional integration of this machine age.

And that is precisely what *Ajantrik*, the story, has achieved for the first time in our literature. It has achieved it in a unique, and in my opinion, a typically Indian way. It contains that quaint indigenous flavour in its plot structure, its characterisation, its very style of narration.

Also, it rings true. It rings true in every line of it. I have seen such men (I have had the doubtful pleasure of meeting Bimal himself in real life) and have been able to believe in their emotions. There lies the greatest source of power of the story.

I had a chance and made the film. It was fun all the way through—it is still fun while it is grossing exactly nothing at the box-office.

There were other points of attraction for me.

Firstly, the story is laid in a terrain which is one of the least-known to normal Bengali film-goers. They have no emotional attachment with it. Try however I might. I could not peddle in nostalgic sentimentalism, which is the curse of many a fine worker in this country. I had to create new values, all within the span of the film itself. On the other hand I could cash in on the novelty of the landscape. The different planes and levels are refreshingly unusual to the plainsmen of the Gangetic delta.

Secondly, the tribal people. They are the people who own the land where the story is laid. Without them the landscape would lose its charm and meaning. I cannot marshal my camera on any spot without integrating them into my composition.

Also it is a silly story.

Only silly people can identify themselves with a man who believes that God-forsaken car has life.

Silly people like children, simple folk like peasants, animists like tribals.

To us, city folks, it is a story of a crazy man.

Especially the machine retards us. Had it been a bullock or an elephant or some other animal object, it would not have been so difficult. We could imagine ourselves in love with a river or a stone. But a machine—there we draw the line.

But these people do not have that difficulty. They are constantly

in the process of assimilating anything new that comes their way. In all our folk art the signs of such assimilation are manifest.

This process is even more marked among the tribal people of Central India. And the tribe I chose—the Oraons—are very culture-minded and have this tendency in a pronounced manner. I had a nodding acquaintance with them, having been among them as a documentary film maker for about five years. And I wondered at their vigorous imagination again and again. They would fully understand Bimal, for they themselves are like him.

The Oraons have the same attitude to externals which is the emotional thesis of this story. I found an affinity between their pathetic fallacy and Bimal's. For this reason they provided the ideal setting for this film. I could utilise their many significant customs. The different moods created by their high-living *Buirakhis* (Hags) titled at different angles and dangled in different tempo is an expression of the most artistic temperament. I admit that these and many other things were too specialised in their meaning to have any general significance. But if I could go on integrating them into my pattern of things in a consistent manner, I could hope to arrive at a cumulative effect which would be a major contributing factor beyond just local colour.

Thirdly, the story has a ramshackle car as its central character. This very fact threw up so many plastic and dynamic potentialities. I could always fall back upon mechanical speed—what with opportunities of bringing in the time-honoured mechanism of the chase and hair-breadth escapes and breakdowns at judiciously chosen moments!

Fourthly, we had to work with the poorest possible materials and that too, on a shoe-string budget. This film threw before us a challenge at every step. Every shot taken was every shot achieved. This seemed to me to be really invigorating. It is a situation in which one curses oneself at every step and likes it.

All these considerations drove me to *Ajantrik*, and I jumped at the first opportunity to make it.

Experimental Cinema

The word 'experiment' with reference to film making has become almost a "cliche" word. Experimentation in cinema is a vast and tricky subject. Experimental films are also called, at times, "art films". Experiment in any medium is the extension of the potentialities of the medium itself. Experimental films are explorations in the cinema, by people who seek self-expression in art. Each of these pictures is a personal expression of the artist and it is invariably the product of a single mind.

Experimentation in cinema can be of two types:

- (1) Experimentation with the medium itself.
- (2) Experimentation with the medium for other purposes.

1. Experimentation With the Medium of Expression itself

This sort of experimentation can be classified into two groups—

- (i) Mechanical-technical and (ii) Artistic,
- (i) Mechanical-technical:

You must be knowing that the National Film Board of Canada has an artist called Norman McLaren. He continually experiments with the medium itself. He goes to the extent of creating sound by scratching the sound-track. Sound, you know, can be of two types, (a) variable area and (b) variable density, the former being used till now. McLaren scratches the sound track and produces peculiar sounds which cannot be produced in the normal way. He has been eminently successful in his experimentation. This is experimentation in the mechanical sense. Similarly all the wide-screen

systems you have been hearing about, of late, like Cinemascope, Todd-Ao and Cinerama—all these are the results of experimentation in the mechanical field. Abel Gance, way back in 1928 used the triple screen systems for his picture *Napoleon*. The anamorphic lens is the basis of all wide-screen systems. Ultimately the developments have come to Cinerama and 'total screen'. This is experimental in Mechanical-technical terms,

(ii) Artistic:

When 'we' talk of 'experimental films', we mean experiment on the artistic side, which is a tricky proposition. It can be experimentation with lines, circles etc. Psychologists have proved that such kinds of experimentation have a tremendous impact on audience minds. If an artist tries to experiment with lines only, to create certain emotional moods, then his experimentation comes under the 'artistic' category. The same goes with one who wants to experiment with colour—colour has so many facets for creating emotional moods. The same is also true of music (not songs), which is the most abstract of all arts. Certain moods which you cannot express through lines or colour can be created through music. Let me recall in this connection Walt Disney's *Make Mine Music*, which is really experimental in the sense that it is a collection of musical themes on 900 to 1000 ft. length of films, and also his *Fantasia*, which is an exploration into the abstract aspect of 'music'. But unfortunately Walt Disney has crudely commercialised his innovations even though they are very seriously done. This sort of abstract approach to the medium can be truly called experimental. It is really a joy to try to invoke certain moods through abstract types of experimentation.

Surrealism

Then there is the surrealist approach, the school headed by **Salvador Dali** and others—Louis Bunuel was a surrealist in his early film. *L'Age D'or* (Age of Gold). This approach calls for the abstraction of reality for its essentials, as the artist thinks fit. In Bunuel's other film *Un Chien Andalou*, in the rape sequence we see abstract images in quick succession, such as the scratching of an eye ball, dripping blood, a huge piano, two dead donkeys on the piano... etc. This is one kind of experiment. I am oversimplifying the facts of experimental cinema. Whatever be the experiments all of them are trying to find the limit, the end, the border,

the output up to which the expression of film can go. This is the basic approach of all experimental cinema, it is the concern of artistes like Bunuel, Fellini, Eisenstein. Pudovkin—their concern for man that has given a lead to experimentation in the cinema. They throw men in a situation and go deep down to find how much they can realize. Their deep concern for humanity, for man and his society, is the primary reason for their creative activities in the experimental field.

La Dolce Vita is an experimentation in the sense that it has summed up the whole 2000 years of European Civilisation, which is decaying and dying, within the frame-work of a motion picture of three hours duration. Fellini took up a form of a peculiar type—a structure of film making never before tried by anybody—a structure full of symbols. From the filth and dirt of Roman top-life and lower life to the absolutely frigid sexy film star—all these are summed up in a sea-monster writhing and dying. His hatred for his surroundings and the puss generated within modern society has been summed up in this symbol. When Dr. Steiner says he is *afraid of* the times in which he is living, and later when he commits suicide, after killing his two children, the police inspector asks the reason to hero Mastroianni who happens to know him, and the hero says: 'He was afraid—afraid of the present world'. These are gems of words which carry more meaning than can be conveyed in a volume of sentences.

Eisenstein experiments when he uses the intellectual montage in *October*. Flaherty experiments when he puts the lone cajoun boy in the onslaught of industrialisation in a peaceful bayou country. In my own *Ajantrik* I have tried to experiment with a strange love between man and machine. All these are attempts of experimentation... Eisenstein's compositions and takes in *Battleship Potemkin*, were experimental in their time. But they are not now. Experimentation is an ever-living and never dying thing. 'How I can do something new'... that should be the attitude of one who wants to make experimental films. Experimenters always have to be alert.

In Alain Resnais's *Last Year in Marienbad*, for which Alain Robbe-Grillet wrote the script, we are never introduced to the characters. Resnais has tried to walk backward and forward in time, just as in a dream. His justification is that, while you experience a dream, you do not find anything illogical... You are

wholly in it. In one of his interviews. Robbe-Grillet has stated that this is an attempt to catch the dreamlike quality of the film. French artists have got reasons for experimentation.

2. Experimentation With the Medium for Other Purposes

You can experiment with the film medium to explore the outside world. Just like in that fine documentary on the Todas, *The Vanishing Tribe*, there are quite a number of tribals, like the Onge of Andamans and Anganagas of Nagaland. They are a little stream in the development of Indian life and culture. Films made on their mode of life, their customs, their festivals, Gods, (every tribal has got a 'God' known as Totems) have a wide anthropological and cultural interest. These films can definitely be called experimental, as their makers take the camera to remote corners of the world and enduring heavy odds, they try to record their experiences as they find them. They are much more restrained than us. Their experiences are always directly connected with the universe, there are a lot of things we have to learn from them. I have been trying to learn myself, which I have not been able to yet, but I know that I will never be a film maker without learning my people. My hats off to them... They are the salt of the earth. From them we have to learn... I am yet to learn...

Sound in Film

We are so used to calling cinema a visual art that I sometimes fear we shall soon forget that sound has an important world of its own. In fact, sound has that much importance in a film as it contributes to the aesthetic quality of the visuals.

One more thing: while talking of films we include both the silent films and the talkies. This is not proper. Silent films are a completely different genre of art: their movements, their grammar, their assumptions belong to a different category. *Potemkin* or *The Passion of Joan of Arc* are not the precursors of *Pathé* Pancluii. They have given birth to the sound film but, for that matter, movies have come from still photographs. Just imagine the riot that started as soon as movement came in. Similarly, it is only sound that has been added to these silent films; but the basic principle has changed.

What constitutes the ribbon of sound that is married to the visuals? They are five: speech or dialogue, music, incidental noise, effect noise and silence.

Dialogue need not be described; it is most explicit. It directs the story (if any) straight along the images: this is primary.

Music: this is a great implement for a film; at times it has the last word. Through music one lets the film speak on a parallel level, a different level. There are many ways to do it. For instance, before we write sound of the first few bars, we have already conceived the total musical structure in our minds—a kind of overture for the film during the credit titles. From there follow the other sequences, other incidents along with corresponding musical

compositions. The principal idea is, to use a particular tune as complementary to the theme.

Music is highly symbolic. This is my symbol, that is why it is being used. But behind it lies a conscious pattern. For example, I may use a Bandish'of the 'Raga Kalavati' during an early love scene. I do not use it only because it fits with the scene well. I am all the while considering using the same tune during the climax—the final separation. This makes up the total statement.

The central theme for *Komal* Gandhvir was the unification of the two Bengals: this accounts for the persistent use of old marriage songs: even during the scenes of pain and separation the music sings of marriage.

Another example is in Satyajit Ray's *Aparajito*. In Pather *Panchali*, you hear the same tune again and again—that was rather the theme music for the film. Anywhere, any time you hear that tune, it will remind you of the endless greenness of Bengal's villages. Satyajit Ray has done a wonderful thing with this. In *Aparajito*, Sarbajaya and Apu are returning to the village from Benaras; the train leaves the bridge behind; soon through the windows one can see the landscape of Bengal, green and beautiful. Just then on the sound-track, you hear that theme tune. Just once for the whole length of the film, but once is enough. A comment, a correlative between the past and present floods your mind with the memories of Nischintipur (the village of Apu) and Durga and the white cotton fields.

Sometimes one has to comment on a particular piece of music in another director's film. I have done this myself. In *La Dolce Vita*, during the final orgy, where Fellini has cracked his whip at the whole of Western civilization, we hear Patricia. I tried to say something similar in the context of today's intellectual Bengal in Suburnu Rekha. I have used the same music in the scene at the bar so as to make a comment. Do you say I was influenced? Not at all! Only that this music helped me to say a lot of things.

Sometimes a particular character may have a particular tune. Before or after his appearance or even during his presence, if those few bars are played again and again, it does make a comment. Or, sometimes, the director hides music up his sleeve for a master stroke later. For instance, in Bunuel's *Nazarin* there is no music. Only during the last sequence a thousand drums break into sound. What this meant was quite clear to those who saw the film.

Reverberating sound:—a big world by itself. The reverberation can come out in two ways: through whatever is visible, and through bringing in the sound of whatever is not visible. Say we have a scene where a girl is waiting for a man's arrival whom she does not want to meet. She is sitting on a bed. Suddenly she learns that the man is coming. She stands up; the bed makes a cracking noise. That little noise is enough to speak for the anguish in the girl's heart. Or, a couple standing beside the road; just when they are about to say the most profound thing, a car passes honking its horn loudly. This is another example.

We also use sound that does not correspond to the visuals. A young man and a woman are sitting silently inside a room; from far away you can hear a bird's call. Or, a man walking with a dream in his eyes; a weary train's whistle, floats in. Or, a woman is standing face to face with her final tragedy—somewhere someone is hearing the dialogue of Shakuni from *Karnar/una*.

Sound can also be very effective even when it is ornamental. In one of my films, *Meghe Dhaka Tfirfl*, I had a scene showing a painful moment in a woman's life, on the sound track I used the sound of a whip lashing. There is another use of sound called 'design by inference'. This is a tremendous thing. I can give a few examples. An old man is sitting on a bench; closely by, you hear the sound of a locomotive shunting and other noises of a railway station. It would appear, the location of the scene is a railway waiting room. But the camera has not left the old man's face even once. Or, on the face of a woman you hear someone banging an iron gate and locking it. You will feel as if the woman was being put into captivity.

In *Meghe Dhaka Tard*, the mother does not want her eldest daughter to fall in love, but can't prevent it after all. While they are talking, the sound-track carries the sound of cooking—the splattering sound of oil being heated. Later, we see the daughter somewhere else, but the same sound is repeated. This gives an image of what is going on inside her mind.

Lastly, silence: I believe, this is the most symbolic.

Music in Indian Cinema and the Epic Approach

We, the younger generation of Indian film-makers, have developed a tendency of fighting shy of the operatic forms of cinema.

There are reasons galore, of course. The tradition of musical film, specially as practised by Bombay film-makers, is a monstrous tradition. Moreover, it is a most unfilmic tradition. Over and above that, this tradition directly stems from the corrupt, inartistic and vulgar art forms of *jatras*, *nautankis*, opera-plays, and other hybrid stage productions. These forms were holding sways in our land just before the advent of talkies.

So, when the educated representatives of our bourgeoisie got the tools of creation in their hands, they laughed this form of entertainment out of the efforts of serious film-making.

That was an extremely logical development, this expurgation.

But, then has come the time for fresh evaluation. (I am of course speaking here only of Bengali cinema). We are now slowly realizing certain facts concerning our people and our art.

Ours is a naturally melody-loving people. All our emotions are realized in our typical melodic note-combinations. With the growth of our virile civilization of a mere five-thousand years, music has entered our soul.

Also we are an epic people. We like to sprawl, we are not much involved in the story-intrigues, we like to be re-told the same myths and legends again and again. We, as a people, are not much sold on the 'what' of the thing, but the 'why' and 'how' of it. This is the epic attitude.

So, the basic folk-forms—forms which the latterday vulgarisations developed, along with devastating and epoch-making social and political changes, and which the early film-making aped and further bowdlerized—are always kaleidoscopic, pageant-like, relaxed, discursive, and their contents are very well known for thousands of years.

And always, music retains a decisive part in them.

Here we find a direct parallel with Athens of circa 450 B.C., the Athens of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes. In short that age of Greece where artistes could and did draw from the common mythic fund of the Homeric legends.

Now the question is, can Indian cinema come of its own without assimilating this folk attitude at least for a period?

It is extremely doubtful that it can.

Even Europe had to knock its head to find out a way in order to be virile. Leaving aside Renaissance paintings, or literature or even poetry (which in particular had to grope its way from Elizabethans down to Cocteau) one finds that in dramaturgy and films also this urge is manifest.

Bertolt Brecht is today hailed as the greatest visionary the stage has produced after Shakespeare. His entire theory of 'epic' theatre is based upon reasonings similar to ours. And, significantly, music and specially folk-melodies of both the east and the west play a vital and inevitable role in his scheme of things.

And, remember always that he had to build up this 'Epic' attitude in the minds of men through his theories of 'Alienation' (*Verfremdung*).

In our country, this epic attitude is still a living tradition, or was—a short while ago, especially in rural areas. . . . and by far the largest of our cinema audiences reside in precisely those areas.

This convention of using melodies, in human voices—even, at places, using them as special song numbers—is this as crude and un-cinematic as we make it out to be?

I shall cite only one example.

Michael Cacoyannis, that great Greek film-maker, has recently completed his latest masterpiece, *Electra*. Significantly, the subject is from the old Greek master, Euripides—because the script is strictly based on the Oresteian tragedy.

The whole film is a study in arrested motion. Nothing moves, up to a certain point. As if we are continually holding our breath

in apprehension of imminent matricide. The camera continually hovers on desolate, blasted landscapes. The figures move surreptitiously, we only glimpse them through long-shots, as if alienated from them.

Then comes the fatal hour. Clytemnestra is murdered, murdered horribly.

The camera stays outside, mercifully. And then the chorus arises, a choral finale in true tragic manner according to age-old Greek tradition.

With that musical wail, the camera starts panning wildly. All the arrested motion is unleashed now to shatter the suspense that was built up so long. That grand chorus absolves us, redeems us and takes us to a height where music only can take us.

This chorus was treated as a separate "song-number".....That is why I always insist that melody and music as such have a place in films, in their own right.

Especially in Indian cinema.

But of course, we must orientate our entire creative endeavour along that channel, the channel of epic mentality.

Experiment in Cinema and I

In India, there has not been much experiment in film. Whatever few have been made have mostly been made in Bengali. There have been some stray attempts in other provinces, like the latest one by Hussain about an artist's approach to the world. But all these fall into that ambiguous territory called 'DOCUMENTARY'.

It is only in Bengal that some feature films have been attempted which may go in the name of 'experiment'. I am not competent to speak about other people's work, so I refrain from commenting on them. I can only speak of my little experience.

My first film, *Ajantrik*, is normally called an experimental film. I don't know how far that is true. But I have been asked from different quarters for whom am I making this film. I always answer that I am making it for myself and for nobody else.

This does not mean, to sympathetic people I say, that I have narcissistic approach to art. And film seems to be an art. You must be engaged to society. You must commit yourself for good in man's destiny, against evil. I don't mean, like Roger Vadim, that he is interested in Napoleon's life because he wants to show the contour of Napoleon's couch where he used to enjoy women and not his historical role... the same goes for my opinion of people like Alain Resnais and Alain Robbe-Grillet—they represent the decadent forces in Western civilization. I consider them completely invalid as experimentalists. For instance, I have had the doubtful pleasure of seeing *Hiroshima Mon Amour* and *L'Annee Dernière a Marienbad*. These films seem to me completely hollow, and just gimmicky, and a pose. I refuse to take these

things to be real experiments in the true sense of the term.

This brings up the moot question, what is experiment? Here lies the crux. As we all know, everything in this universe is relative.

Experiment in films, in relation to what?

In relation to man and his society. Experiment cannot dangle on a void. It must belong.

Belong to man.

I have seen some films by western film-makers like Fellini, whom Gerasimov condemned in Cannes as working out a drain inspector's report in his film *La Dolce Vita*, but Fellini has portrayed most boldly and most sincerely the life around him as we saw it. It is a death certificate to Western civilization. In my films, I have tried to portray my country and the sorrows and sufferings of my people to the best of my ability. Whatever I might have achieved, there was no dearth of sincerity. But sincerity alone cannot amble very far. My ability limits me, and I can operate within that limitation.

In my humble opinion, *Komal* Gandhar probably tried to break the shackles that straight-jackets our cinema. It has a pattern and an approach which may be tentatively called 'experimental'.

Subarnu *Rekha*. Here is a film in which I tried to deal a straight knock-out blow on the nose. It pulls no punches. It has been called melodramatic, and probably rightly so. But critics should remember the name of one gentleman called Bertolt Brecht, who dealt with coincidences and who developed a thing called 'Alienation effect'.

His epic approach to things has influenced me a lot. I have tried in my little way to work out, with the tools of my profession, some similar works. To me, this is experiment. It may be justifiably said that they are not so. I have no quarrel to pick with such opinion. And I end this small essay with a little quotation from Tagore.

Tagore somewhere said that all art must be primarily truthful and then only beautiful. Truth does not make any work a piece of art, but without truth no art is worth its salt.

We better remember it.

Documentary: the Most Exciting Form of Cinema

It all started with an explorer—a geologist. A French fur-trading company, way back in the 1910's, used to send expeditions far into the Eskimo territory to hunt for and collect rare furs in those Canadian Arctic wastes. The man who became the 'Father of the documentary cinema', was attached to such an expedition. More for fun than for any serious purpose, he took a hand-cranked movie camera in one of the expeditions into such wilds.

Thus was born *Nanook of the North*, which revolutionized the concept of documentary cinema and the very life-pattern of its maker.

The documentary, the recording of actuality moulded in an artistic whole and bringing in an insight into the matter at hand, was crying for expression from the very beginning of the career of this new art medium. But documentary, in the modern sense of the term, was made for the first time by Robert J. Flaherty with this film, which was released in 1922.

All over the world, many films were made along these lines, following *Nanook*, —films like *Moana*, *Grass*, *Eve Africa* 1919, *Voyage au Congo*, *Pays du Scalp*, Kuleshov's experiments in the Soviet Union, *The General line*, *Turksib*, *Hien Que les Heures*, *Berlin: Symphony of the city*.

But the realistically-oriented social documentary on specific problems got an impetus and formed itself into a movement when, in Great Britain, a sociologist called John Grierson made the film. *Drifters*, a record of the lives and problems of deep-sea fishermen of the eternally storm-tossed and bitter-cold North Sea.

Flaherty was an isolated phenomenon in America. He was a lonesome figure till—long after—Pare Lorentz joined him with **The Plough That Broke The Plains**. But not so in Great Britain. John Grierson brought over Alberto Cavalcanti from France and gathered around him men of talent—men like Paul Rotha, Basil Wright and others. The G.P.O. Film Unit was born, and then the Crown Film Unit. Films like *Song of Ceylon*, *Night Mail*, *North Sea*. *Housing Problems*, *Industrial Britain*. *Contract*, started pouring out from these organizations.

In the 30's. the British school led the world in this sphere. All that was best in cinematic Britain was expressed through the documentary.

Though, as I have said earlier. Flaherty was a lonesome figure in America, he became an institution by himself, with the passage of time, as probably no other figure in the history of cinema ever became.

When he started work on his *Nanook*, he did it almost spontaneously. Long afterwards, in 1950 (in a recorded conversation published in one of the Penguin Annuals edited by Roger Manvell), he explained the reason and the motivating factor of his filmic efforts thus:

"When I saw these men around me (the Eskimos). I fell in love with them, and I felt I must talk of them, talk of my love for them, show them to others so that others may share my feelings."

As I am quoting from memory. I am not absolutely sure of the above text, but I am perfectly certain that these were the sentiments expressed.

And they formed the kemal of his life-long held creed.

When he brought to civilization his invaluable footage, one day the whole material went up in flames from a chance-thrown cigarette in the Editing Room. The results of years of gruelling labour turned into ashes before his very eyes. Flaherty, with a characteristic shrug, went back again to the Tundra to reshoot the whole film. In his opinion, the destroyed footage was no good anyway and it was good riddance.

The release of *Nanook* had a history by itself. Flaherty most amusingly talks of the dodges and tricks that he had to employ to release it. in his diary (to be found in Richard Griffith's collection, 'The World of Robert Flaherty'). It was ultimately released in 1922.

And it was an instantaneous success. Flaherty found himself, at first, in fashion in polite society, and then, an object of blind veneration.

Inevitably, Hollywood woke up to him. Of course, from seeing the gross return on the film. No less a law-maker of Hollywood than Sam Goldwyn himself gave carte blanche to him to make a film.

Flaherty went away to the South Seas with raw stock, a camera, a bath, some chemicals and a portable screen. Goldwyn was happy that no crew of 200 or giant equipment and the attendant paraphernalia had to be sent with him. But his sense of bliss was to be short-lived, as it eventually turned out.

There is an amusing anecdote mentioned by Lewis Jacobs in his book "The Rise of the American film". When Flaherty came back with the finished film *Moana*. Sam Goldwyn eagerly arranged projection at the studio theatre. He was geniality itself to Flaherty. Puffing away at his famous cigar, he put his arm around Flaherty and ordered the show to start. He must have been thinking of the meagre budget on which this man had presented him with this latest spectacle. The show was on. When the lights went up again. Goldwyn sat on with a puzzled face for a moment or two, then turned pathetically to Flaherty and exclaimed, "But where are the blizzards?"

This remark was not completely insane if one follows the man's thinking. According to the calculations of film tycoons, Goldwyn must have analysed *Nanook* for its amazing box-office records, and must have come to the brilliant conclusion that the popularity of *Nanook* was due eminently to the stunt-scenes of snow-storms or blizzards. Blizzards brought in the money.

Naturally, he expected Flaherty to repeat those snow-storms, no matter whether they generally occur or not in a tropical island: he felt positively betrayed. That was the end of Flaherty as far as Hollywood was concerned. Later, he once collaborated with the great German director Fred Murnau on a film called 'Tabu', but the whole thing ended in a fiasco.

After this, Flaherty did not get a chance to make another film in America for a pretty long time. The next film he made was *Man of Aran*.

The islanders of Aran, which is not more than a hundred miles (as the crow flies) from London, lead a precarious livelihood

which is almost unbelievable. J.M. Synge has immortalised these great, sturdy people of picturesque speech in his one-act play, *Riders to the Sea*.

Flaherty turned out no less great a work of art. One's credulity is strained when one remembers that a husband-wife team have taken those physically impossible sequences with a silent hand-held camera—specially that fantastic sequence of the canvas-boat (Carragh), struggling against the formidable, storm-tossed sea where waves 500 ft. or more high are coming all the way across the Atlantic from the Americas, and are dashing against the high cliffs of the Aran Islands. This film is a supreme act of courage as truly as the lives of its subjects are. The physical presence that one feels while witnessing the film is more than sufficient to unnerve a normal, city-bred audience. This film has to be seen to be believed.

This is the first film in which Flaherty could use the sound-track. And what a use he made of it. The use of incidental noises—the endless groaning of the sea-waves, the howling wind, the clatter of a chance-thrown rock—they bring life itself into the images.

The use of music is also extremely exciting.

After this film, there was the sad interlude of *Elephant Boy*, when Flaherty came to our country. One gets excited when one thinks of the really worthwhile subjects concerning our country which could have been handled by Flaherty if proper sponsoring was allowed to him.

Then the old man was contacted by the New Deal administration of his own country, and Flaherty, for the first time, concentrated on a social problem of general validity. The film was on the agricultural questions of the United States, and was to be called *Earth*. But the warlike preparations among the European nations and the hostile bureaucracy in his own state successfully saw the demise of the film.

The common criticism held against Flaherty, that he always involved himself in the back-water civilizations, photographing romantic and exotic ways of life of some group of men in remote parts of the world—building up a sort of ideal about them—could have been judged in the proper light if this film were allowed to be completed and released.

Just after the war, I think it is Standard Oil of New Jersey who

approached him for making a documentary on oil-drilling operations. He was given complete freedom, and he was not pressed to trumpet the sponsors' name loudly either within the film itself or in the titles. The result was one of the most magnificent films ever made. *Louisiana Story* turned out to be his swan-song also.

Set in the swampy bayou-country of the State of Louisiana, a French dialect-speaking Cajun boy is the hero of the film. He and his small raccoon (a sort of small amphibious animal) used to paddle through the peaceful swamps and lakes of this quiet land. The only enemy was the alligator. Breaking the peace of this landscape, one day, came speed-boats, followed by steamers and derricks and tugboats and strange-men.

The tenor of the boy's life (Nepoleon Ullyses is the boy's name) is shattered. New interests dawn, new friendships crop up. The boy has wonderful visits to the mysterious boring machine—and there is that fire in the well one night—then the men leave. The derrick stands and peace descends again on the bayou country of Louisiana.

The film has influenced so many film-makers and films all over the world that enumeration of their names will be tiresome.

Flaherty made only four films, for all practical purposes, in his long career. But that was sufficient to engrave his name in the Hall of Immortals in Cinema. The partisan criticism of his romantic inclination has been toned down with the passage of time into insignificance, and his influence is now discernible in the works of all the schools of documentary film-makers. That is why one has to refer back to him to get inspiration again and again. Without a thorough study of his works we cannot understand the development of serious and creative documentary films.

In the meanwhile, all over the world, documentary came into its own. In France films like *Delachet's* *The Rotter*, *Taris*, *De Mille Ua Monastere*—started coming out one after another. In other countries of Europe, documentary flowered into a many coloured thing. Then another kind of phenomenon started occurring in the Netherlands. The great figure of Joris Ivens arose. Here is the true documentary maker, the International Man. After the great success of *The Bridge* and *Zuiderzee*, in his native country, he came away to the bleeding Spain of the Republics, and made Spanish *Earth*. His inclination led him to all the oppressed

countries, and he ended up with a documentary in Djakarta.

Another figure in the Netherlands, Helen Van Dongen, after distinguished work in her own land, joined Flaherty as editor in *Louisiana Story*.

In another part of the world, documentary was nourishing vigorously from much earlier times—that was in the Soviet Union.

With the birth of the new republic, news-reel teams sprang up. Their exciting activities can be learnt in detail from Jay Leyda's book 'Kino'.

Just after the revolution, there came a challenge in the air in all the arts, with a strong orientation towards composite arts.

In theatre, Vakhtangov with his Princess *Turandot*, Meierhold with his renderings of Gogol. Tairov with his *Optimistic Tragedy*, Eisenstein with his rendering of Guss in the Prolecut theatre, revolutionised stage art.

Mavakovskv led the revolt in poetry, and Gorky in literature in general. In this atmosphere was born Kuleshov's workshop and Dziga Vertov's newsreel assembly. They, as all the other cinema workers of Soviet Union of the time, were strongly realistically oriented. Then came Eisenstein the architect with his *Strike* and *Battleship* Potemkin. Pudovkin the chemist with his documentary on Pavlov's theory. Mechanics of the Brain, Chess Fever and *Mother*, Dovzhenko the cartoonist with his Zvenigoru. All these films hover between documentary and feature types of cinema.

In the legitimate documentary film. Dziga Vertov, that eccentric, started pouring out newsreels called Kino-Pravda and *Kino-Eye*. Then he went on to creative documentary with his *The Man With the Movie camera*, the camera acrobatics of which seem still remarkable today.

And then arose the figure of Esther Shub, the perfect editor. Pindingandsalvaging newsreel-strips from forgotten archives, she built one artistic whole after another, starting with *The Russia of Nikolai II and Leo Tolstoy*.

Then there was Turin. His *Turksib*, a creative rendering of the building of the Trans-Siberian Railway, instantly won critical applause.

The Soviet Government in this period sent two Agit-Prop trains to the provinces which carried full complements for film production and projection. These trains used to stop at wayside

stations. The film-maker was given a chance to study the local problems. Then they made the films, printed them, and showed them to the very people about whose problems the films were concerned, all within a week's time. The effects can be understood even today.

Gorky was extremely interested in the New World of Cinema. He conceived a film called *A day* in Soviet Union. On a specific date, hundreds of cameramen would be scattered all over the entire land of the Soviet Union, and would record whatever chance-happenings occurred before them.

Then the entire footage would be assembled and shown. It was a grandiose plan.

Then came the war. Chamberlain and Daladier sold Czechoslovakia to Hitler at Munich.

The crisis was on.

War accelerates things. It gives that impetus to the efforts of men and nations which brings out that extra-something in their activities.

War is a curse, but some blessings are gleaned from it which allow men to adjust themselves better to the problems of peace, too.

Warlike Germany was mobilising from 1935 onwards. In matters of film too, the Nazis were no less thorough.

Ever since he saw *Battleship Palemkin*, Dr. Goebbels urged his film-makers to study the craft of the film and channelise their skill into propagandistic documentaries. With characteristic shrewdness, Dr. Goebbels steered clear of feature and story films from the very first and concentrated on propagandistic documentaries. The result was, the German film-makers became extremely efficient in creating a sort of organized lie which goes in the name of truth. Under the groat guidance of the master of the Ufa days (Whose *Kameradschaft* was one of the masterpieces of semi-documentary recording of a coal mine disaster way back in 1931, and ironically, whose theme was- the international brotherhood of labour, specially that of Franco-German labour), G.W. Pabst, the German documentary-making machinery became as efficient and formidable as their Wehrmacht. Persons like Leni Riefenstahl started pouring out masterpieces of concoction, starting with the record of the Berlin Olympics in 1936.

After the war, incidentally, a print of a film on Nazi Victories

and allied barbarities came into the hands of occupation forces. They could not but marvel at the command on the medium and ingenious cunning of the Nazi film machine.

The nations of Western Europe at the time were groaning under the heels of Hitler. Great film-makers of countries like France either left their motherland or joined partisans to fight the battle in the physical sense. There were very rare cases of capitulators and collaborators—they were few and far between.

Across the channel, Great Britain was seething. In its total war effort, the propaganda and documentary film had its place in the scheme of things. Apart from the tried hands at documentary-making, masters from other fields offered their services for such productions, talents like Noel Coward, Carol Reed, Anthony Asquith. The results of the joint efforts were seen in such superb films as *Target for Tonight*, *In Which We Serve*, *Desert Victory* and innumerable others. Almost simultaneously, Paul Rotha was making another kind of commentary on contemporary life such as *The World is Rich*—the theme of which is hunger, as opposed to plenty and waste.

In another part of the world, in America, Pearl Harbour electrified the nation and galvanised it into a cohesive whole and poised it for action.

The series, *The March of Time* came into being. It went on being released regularly. Such stalwarts of Hollywood as Frank Capra, John Ford and others started turning out brilliant documentaries on military-technical and general subjects. In the campaign in the Pacific, cinematographers accompanied Admiral Nimitz's and MacArthur's men: Bataan, Iwo Jima, the Philippines—in all these campaigns, cinematographers took part.

Across the globe, Soviet cinematography geared itself towards the war effort. Thousands of cameramen-soldiers went on recording battles at the front at first hand, and brought back tremendous materials which are as unprecedented as emotionally shattering. Hundreds of them died in the battle of Stalingrad, which was recorded in its full detail in a fantastic feature-length documentary produced by Central Documentary Studio of Moscow and directed by Varlamov.

Many other such films were made and circulated during those terrible war years.

Here I may be permitted to make a digression, in 1952, when the

first International Film Festival was held in India, Varlamov came over here along with the Soviet delegation in that festival. He came to make a documentary called *Across India*.

I had the good fortune to be one of their guides, along with some of my friends who are nowadays famous film-makers. At that time I had the opportunity of watching the working methods of Soviet documentarists.

Varlamov brought with him a team of four or five cameramen—one of them being the woman cameraman(?)—Galina Monglovs-koya.

Varlamov used to get up early in the morning and sit with the list of interesting places (which he had made after long discussion with us the previous night), allot each cameraman a portion of it, with penetrating directions about the footage to be covered and the general attitude of the takes to be maintained. The man had an amazing knack of catching the plastic points of the subject, only by discussion, without seeing the things themselves. He used to sit, profusely perspiring, almost naked, in that hotel room in those grey dawns, and bark out commands curtly to his different cameramen. His relationship with his cameramen were those of the father with the sons and daughters.

We used to be assigned with one or another cameraman. We used to scatter out after those instructions and work for the whole of the day.

When we used to come back in the evening dog-tired to the hotel—Varlamov would be sitting there on the bed semi-naked, with a mug of beer in his hand and a quizzical smile on his lips.

I never saw that man go out for shooting or exert himself in any way whatsoever. What he used to do the whole day, I have no way of ascertaining, but he used to come up in the evening conferences with surprising details about things which foretold his prior knowledge of the subject.

I have not had the good fortune to see the finished film—it was not destined to be much of a thing anyway, being a straight propoganda film—but I have learnt a thing or two from that flabby man's extremely agile brain and that Himalayan coolness.

War thus expanded the horizon and accelerated the growth of the documentary all over the world.

In India too, during the war years, the rudiments of documentary and newsreel movements were introduced. If there

were earlier efforts in India, I do not know of them. In any case, such efforts could not have been works of much importance.

During the war, the Government of India formed a newsreel film-unit which was attached with the army. Some of its work could be seen by the public at large. At the fag end of the war, or just after it was over, the same unit formed the core of the organization called the Indian News Parade, which was straight-away a newsreel organization.

After Independence, this same organization was expanded and Films Division was born. Films Division grew into a documentary producing concern as we see it now.

Outside Films Division, a documentary film-maker of note was Paul Zils, whose films on the Todas of Nilgiri I remember.

Films Division has a newsreel section, a group of directors making one or two thousand foot films on specific themes, sponsored by different Ministries and other Government organizations. They also give out contracts called by tender from a panel of approved producer, and sometimes they approached film-makers of note for some particular special documentary of feature length. They also buy, if they think fit, documentaries already made by private parties. The best among these films made by Films Division are quite competent without being brilliantly creative. An organization which is hedged and hemmed in by so many restrictions from all sides cannot possibly do more. And the central guidance, which is of paramount importance in matters of art (let us remember John Grierson), is sadly lacking, it appears.

Apart from Films Division, many State Governments and Semi-Government organizations sponsor documentaries on varied subjects. Some of them even have their own permanent producing units, but their results seem to be extremely frustrating up to now.

The other sponsors that we have in our country are the big commercial houses operating in India. Their counterparts all over the world have eminently shown tact and understanding in sponsoring documentary films so that some of the greatest documentaries ever made have been under their aegies.

I have not much opportunity of seeing the majority of the films made in this country, as the exhibition side of the affair is not yet satisfactorily solved. As a random thought I think of *Konark*. I remember *Pancho-Thupi-a* Bengali village by Das gupta as a tolerably serious effort. Bimol Roy's Gautam Buddha and Calcutta

Film Society's *Calcutta* are total ciphers, in my opinion. They have missed the bus by a wide margin. Potentially exciting material has been largely wasted in these films – I am sorry to admit. Another Dasgupta film. The *Tata Story*, had certain interesting moments, specially in the sound track, but as a whole it does not impress.

I have seen the longer version of Satyajit Ray's *Rabindranath*. As it seems to be the most serious attempt so far made in our country, it demands a bit of space.

As a whole, the film fails to convey the tensions of a turbulent artist struggling throughout his life, above all, against mediocrity. Too much space has been absolutely wasted on a sort of tourist-vision of old-time Calcutta, the family tree, the Brahmo Samaj. By dwelling on Debendranath etc. the balance has been completely spoiled. One could do away with the first 2,000 ft. of the film without losing a single point about Tagore.

The turning point in Tagore's intellectual life, that moment, recorded in his autobiography, which gave birth to his first major poem. "The awakening from Dream of the Spring"—either Satyajit has completely missed the significance of it or has misunderstood it.

I did not also like the way the "Crisis of Civilization",—almost Tagore's last testament—has been illustrated by the footage of ravaged Europe of the Hitlerite hordes. It betrays a certain lack of taste—the way the thing has been played up (which is tantamount to playing to the gallery,—it seemed to me).

There were certain factual mistakes also, such as on Tagore's taking to painting.

The film had its brilliant moments too.

Above all, the mental state that one arrives at the end of the film is definitely all-embracing. Use of certain songs sung by Tagore himself on the empty verandah in the empty house of Jorasanko is masterly. The use of certain portraits at certain judiciously chosen moments is a sign of supreme artistic temperament and judgement.

I wish I could be more generous to this, the only genuine creative-documentary made till now in India. It is rather a matter of pity that the film is not entirely as satisfying as it could be. It was rather made in haste—that was the mistake. I think,—and is not a product of deep brooding and concentration.

But Tagore is a tough customer, one should remember that too. What is a documentary?

It can be a straight coverage of some event in the strict newsreel fashion, or it can be a profoundly artistic, creative piece of work like Cousteau's *The Silent World* or Arne Sucksdorff's *The Great Adventure* (both of which films are, incidentally, Grand Prize winners at Cannes). The word documentary covers a wide range of categories of film.

Then there are marginal types of films, for example, Rossellini's *Paisan* or De Sica's *Sciuscià*, these films heralded the advent of so-called neo-realism.

If the main difference between feature films and documentaries is taken to be the fact that one enacts and recreates situations and events and the other does not, utter confusion will follow. *Man of Aran* was a recreation of events which normally occur in the lives of a people. In one instance in that film, there was a re-creation of activity long forgotten by the present-day inhabitants of the island. That was the tiger-shark harpooning sequence. These creatures stopped coming to these shores long ago, but during Flaherty's shooting they suddenly appeared again. Flaherty had to take much trouble to find some old man who still remembered the art of harpooning the sharks and who could teach the secret to the young actors in the film.

Still, *Man of Aran* is not considered to be a feature film.

If we take employment of actors, as the criterion, this will lead us nowhere. Nowadays, almost all the documentaries employ actors, not always people impersonating themselves or their like.

Conversely, from Pudovkin and Eisenstein onwards, use of nonactors as a conscious theory has played a very big part in the development of cinema as a whole.

Weaving a filmic pattern around a story a plot is not also the thing we are seeking. Many a great documentary film has been woven around such plots. For instance, *Louisiana Story*.

Actually, in the truly creative sense, the documentary is an attitude. The truth lies in reality, and the camera is eminently capable and uniquely suited to recording physical reality in all its varied aspects. It becomes a duty and an onus on the artist to record them and present them in an artistic manner.

That is why the documentary is the most exciting and most valid and legitimate form of cinema.

And that is why the border-line between story-film and documentary is broken again and again by all the great artists in all the periods of the history of the cinema.

Luiniere's "documentary" on A Train's Arrival At *the Station* or The *Practical Joke of the Hose with the Gardener*, truly performed the duties of cinema—just as *Pat her* Panchali did. And, in the documentary it is a wrong notion that subjective assessments, generalisation, compression, seeking the essence—these do not play a part. They very much do.

Almost all the great masters of cinema today have made documentaries sometime or other, even in the conventional sense of the term—Resnais, Antonioni, Satyajit, Karel Reisz. Roman Polanski made his famous *Wardrobe* film before he made *Knife in the Water* which got the Critics Award at Venice. The younger French experimentalists periodically make documentaries between their features—some regularly buzz off to Cuba to make them (Cuba being very much in need of such talents.)

In our country this has not yet developed. There are the economic factors—a generally low standard of living and lack of enlightened sponsorship.

But potentially, India is one of the richest countries to be exploited by the camera—and almost all of it still virgin. Some foreigners have come and done some work (Sucksdorff spent some years in the country and made two films on Kashmir and, *The Flute and The Arrow*).

Then, the American television people are coming more and more nowadays to cover different aspects of the Indian scene. These, along with the efforts of Films Division directors—some of whose works are really exciting—are not adequate by themselves.

Here, I think, is a vacuum which can be filled up by the big commercial houses. I think some serious efforts have been there, but judging from the results, it appears that not much headway has been made.

Though I have no direct experience of such things. I may venture to surmise about the difficulties of turning out worthwhile documentary films—of course, from the point of view of the film-maker.

The first thing is the question of audience. Creative documentaries of feature or semi-feature length have absolutely no chance of public circulation in India, except as a miracle. And I

don't think the commercial houses should aim at such audiences.

So-called "prestige" films made for specialised audiences generally fall between two stools.

The audience to be aimed at by such sponsors should be the major International Film Festivals. And the aim should be the top prizes. That way lies creation of good-will and development of public relations. A film winning applause in such festival is bound to create interest in any country of the world, and such a film, for its cultural value, is bound to be object of discussion amongst the right set of people in society in those countries.

This aim, and a clear idea about the audience to be approached (via festivals) are half the battle won.

And such films should not and cannot cost very much. The documentary films that are being sponsored by such concerns are being paid for by fantastic amounts of money anyway. With much less expenditure much better and longer films can easily be turned out.

The next difficulty that comes to my mind is the method of sponsorship and the way of handling the film-making proper.

Cinema and the Subjective Factor

"The symbolic-imaginative view of the world is just as organic a part of a child's life as the view transmitted by the sense-organs. It represents the natural and spontaneous striving which adds to man's biological bond a parallel and equivalent psychic bond, thus enriching life by another dimension—and it is eminently this dimension that makes man what he is. It is the root of all creativity".

(*'The Collective Unconscious'*—C C Jung).

"The two fundamental types of mind are complementary: The tough-minded, representing the inert, reactionary; and the tender-minded, the living progressive impulse—respectively, attachment to the local and timely and the impulse to the timeless universal. In human history the two have faced each other in dialogue since the beginning, and the effect has been that actual progress and process from lesser to greater horizons, simple to complex organisations, slight to rich patterns of art work which is civilization in its flowering in time.....there is a deep psychological cleavage separating the tough-minded 'honest-hunters' from tender-minded 'shamans'."

(*'The Masks of God : Primitive Mythology'*—Joseph Campbell)

"The etymological relations between seizure, fury, passion, spirit, song, ardour, being-outside-oneself, poetry and oracle characterize the creative aspect of the Unconscious, whose activity sets man in motion, overpowers him and makes him its

instrument. The superiority of the irrupting powers of the Unconscious, when they appear spontaneously, more or less excludes the ego and consciousness; that is to say, men are seized and possessed by these powers. But since this possession causes higher, supra-conscious powers to appear in man, it is sought after in cult, ritual and art."

(*The Great Mother**—Erich Newmann).

(I apologize for starting off in such a manner—with a barrage of quotations. But, unfortunately, these are essential for establishing the point that I am going to make. And there may be some consolation in the thought that we have got rid of them once for all.)

Whenever one has to think of the subjective aspect in cinema,—one has to trace it through all the arts; nay, through civilization itself, and through the very roots of all creative impulses. The matter cannot be taken up in isolation.

As Depth Psychology and Comparative Mythology have laid bare certain fundamental workings of the human psyche as ever-recurring constellations of primordial archetypes, our task to-day has become easier.

We now know, all that creates art in the human psyche also creates all religion: a medicine man, a 'shaman', a 'rishi', a 'poet' and a 'village woman possessed by a seizure', are, fundamentally, set in motion by the same or similar kinds of unconscious forces.

And these forces are the very ones which are continually nourishing the subjective psychic bond, giving an inner subjective correspondence to the objective creation around us.

It follows that all art is subjective. Any work of art is the artist's subjective approximation of the reality around him. It is a sort of reaction set in motion by the creative impulse of the human unconscious.

The entire history of human civilization shows a peculiar phenomenon. As William James has termed them—there are always two types of minds operating through the length and breadth of human history: the 'tough' and the 'tender-minded'. The tough-minded are always the "honest-hunters". It does not matter whether they hunt for mammoth, dollars, pelts or working hypotheses. The tender-minded ones are the 'shamans', the risliis and the poets, the seers and the singers, the possessed and the

inspired of this world.

It is the second kind of men who are eminently the vessels or vehicles of that force of the unconscious and through whom and whose creations become manifest the images and symbols of that dark deep. Objectivization of this essentially subjective element is the task allotted to such men.

And thus, the dialectics is born: the interplay of the subjective and the objective.

As civilization progresses, Prometheus becomes Aeschylus; the Titans give place to Shawlike supermen, magic is transformed into art.

As we trace the history of all art we find these forces being expressed irresistibly through the art of the day—because art is always period-bound. In the beginning there was sheer motion—motion in unison—dance. Then came mime and drama along with song and poetry.

Prose is the product of a much later society. The tendency towards abstraction in music is also born in a much more sophisticated cultural complex.

Because other shamans had been active in the other branch of magic—that is science—inevitable changes were taking place in human history—spiralling mankind ever up and up. The interplay of the three fundamentals—science, religion, and art,—continuously brought mankind to a more and more complex order of things.

That is why forms of artistic expression were finding themselves inadequate constantly and changing thereby.

Cinema arrived inevitably on the crest borne by inexorable forces. It has yet to take full advantage of its potentials in countries like ours.

The task is being taken up.

When I first heard the term "the subjective camera", I, naturally, was a bit taken aback.

Then I understood the usage. In common cinematic parlance, the term is used in a mechanical-technical sense. It means the marshalling of the camera, taking up one of the particular film's characters' viewpoint in a scene.

This is a kind of subjective use of camera which is to be found in almost every film that one comes across.

Normally there is not much "subjective" in it beyond the

physical fact. Sometimes it attains creative heights in the hands of masters of cinema. But its potentiality for subjective nuances is limited.

Normally, in cinema, the subjective element comes into play by way of straight objective shots. The "subjective" in it is born of the maker's vision. He impregnates this objective piece of recording with tensions and connotations born out of his consciousness and the unconscious.

In either case a comment is thrown on the image. A point of view is imposed. That way, we arrive at the same finding, that all art, and hence all cinema, is subjective.

Dr. Kracauer mentions in his book 'The Redemption of Physical Reality' a comment of Nicola Chiaromonte: a piece of moving film is the supreme example of objective recording. It is clinically disinfected of any consciousness whatsoever.

Excepting in an imaginary case of some robot accidentally clicking the camera on its own volition, there can be no such case of "pure" recording. Man is pathologically incapable of recording in such a manner as is claimed by Dr. Kracauer.

Even in the case of robots—those accidental recordings will become pregnant with subjective overtones the moment an audience, witnesses it.

In all art, on another level, arises the necessity of compression.

An artist sees before him a kaleidoscope of reality. He wants to comprehend it, encompass it. His reaction, based upon his impression, tends to compress reality into an artistic whole with limits imposed by time and space.

Thus is born the quest for the essence. The summary, the abstract. The resume.

From here branch off many schools, many theories. Sometimes there is no theory, but practice.

What would you call Gorky's works, for instance? I personally would like to call it "Essential Realism".

In what category could fall Fellini's *La Dolce Vita*? I do not know. That sea-monster topples all logic!

In fact, I have neither the space nor the inclination forgoing into all the schools and theories of Subjectivism.

I find the subjective wherever the exaltation is, wherever the inspiration is, on this level.

All art, in the last analysis, is poetry. Poetry is the archetype of

all creativity. Cinema at its best turns into poetry.

There is a saying in Comparative Mythology concerning the "blood revenge" psychology in primitive man. By a strange alchemy in the human psyche, "All that is killed turns father".

In art, all that is subjective turns poetic.

And cinema, sometimes, seems to be an art.

Film-Making

Film-making is not an esoteric thing to me. I consider film-making—to start with—a personal thing. If a person does not have a vision of his own, he cannot create. People say that music is the most abstract of all the arts. Though I am a disciple of one of the greatest gurus of India—Ustad Alauddin Khan—I think that film-making can be and is more abstract.

I am not going into the details of film-making. That is for the audiences to see. But I can talk of something else which no film-maker ever talks about. That is the people's co-operation, without which nothing could ever have been made.

I can cite certain examples. I think that will help our countrymen to understand how great are our people.

While I was making my latest film, *Jukti Takko Ar Gappo*, (Arguments and a story) I had to go to a village and had to stay there for a few days.

The persons with whom I had to stay were a poor peasant couple, victims of my exalted dadi, Indira Gandhi. I was at that time oozing blood, having six cavities in my left lung, that too at a very advanced stage of phthisis. Before every shot I started vomiting blood. This peasant couple looked after me and fed me. (Though I had that much of resources with me). One night I asked the lady (the wife), "How do you live?" She said "Rice, wheat, Bajra, Bhutta, everything is a dream to us. We have a small cultivated land from where we bring some bhindi and sell them in the market 10 miles away, and buy a little mustard oil. We cannot buy kerosene oil. So we cannot have the luxury of having a lamp

in our hutment".

They take almost poisonous herbs from nearby jungles and eat once a day. The whole night they live in the dark.

She said. "The authorities have not yet been able to steal two things from us. God's 'air' and the Sun. But they will do it."

I am supposed to be a hard-boiled nut. but believe me, tears came to my eyes.

Such is the condition of my people, and what kind of films we make!

Then let me tell you about another incident. In 1972 I was making a film in so-called Bangla Desh—Tilns Ekti *Nadir Nam* (Titas is the Name of a River). I was shooting seventy-two miles away from Dacca town. I had a stint of shooting of about 15 days there. I shot my film both in a Hindu village and Muslim village by the side of the river Padina. On the last day of shooting, the village chief of the Hindu village asked me to ferry on and have lunch with him, and his family. When I told my unit members to have their lunch they thought that I was going for a booze party. Because I am well-known as a drunkard, so I drove them away and relished very simple food that chief's wife dished out to me.

While I was going back to my launch. I had to cross through the Muslim village where also I had shot the film. The chief there accosted me and said. "You have to eat with us tomorrow." I told him that my work there was complete, and I would go back to Dacca and then to Calcutta. He said "Insha Allah agar Khuda ne chaha to tumhe saknahi padega. aur mere sath khana padega."

I smiled. Then I went back to the launch. My cameraman told me. "Dada. I think there have been some errors in the use of filters. If you allow me to take your car to Dacca, I will process those shots overnight and bring back the report by dawn." And the long and short of it is that he came back and said that all the shots were NG's. So I had to stay on.

Next morning when I went to the Muslim village to shoot, the chief of that village told me, "Sala, did not I tell you yesterday that you would have to take food with me."

I had to sit and eat with that rascal, and he fed me like nobody's business.

Then I remember in 1956, I was making a film *Ajantrik* in the deep interior of Ranchi District in Bihar, 46 miles away from the nearest railway station. I had to shoot a dance sequence of a tribe

called the Oraon. They had so many peculiar social customs. One of them is called Dhumkuria, it is a kind of village club. I had to put up there though my unit stayed in a nearby forest bungalow. But because I had to be intimate with these people I had to stay, drink and dance with them every evening. I became suddenly very much feverish, running high temperature. Prasadi, an aboriginal girl, looked after me and nursed me back to health, like a mother. Mind you, there was no doctor at all within a 30/40 mile area. It was deep in the jungle, I shall never forget that village girl. The memory remains. I wish I could know her whereabouts.

I can enumerate incidents like this a hundred times—more interesting because I have spent 32 years of my blessed life in the bloody game of film-making.

Now to finish up this article. I give you a beautiful example of what we city folks are. Some months back I had been at New Delhi, staying at a Bengali guest house which is just off the end of Anand Parbat. Some friends of mine also reside there in the nearby jungle who appear to be better than homo sapiens (human beings). They are golden-haired monkeys. Every morning some rich fellows used to come in a car with a pack of bananas and used to throw those fruits to the monkeys.

One day a poor vagabond boy came to one of those fellows and begged for one banana. He was beaten mercilessly and all those bananas went into the stomach of monkeys.

Such is life, and what films we make!

No gainsaying.

Interview (1)

Q. Mr. Ghatak, what inspired you to turn to film making?

R.G. You could say that I strayed into films down a zigzag path. If my father had had his way I should have been an income-tax officer. I got the job but left it to join the C.P.I, if I had stuck to it I might have become a Commissioner or Accountant General by now. But now I am only a street dog!

After quitting the job I tried writing poetry, but found myself singularly incapable of it. I shifted my interests to writing short stories and won a bit of fame. More than a hundred of them were published in 'Desh', 'Parichay', 'Shanibarar Chithi' and other leading magazines of Bengal.

That was when I found that literature delves deep into the soul of man, but it works slowly. It takes a long time to grow roots inside. With typical adolescent impatience I wanted to make an immediate impact, because I felt the people should be roused instantly.

Then a miracle happened—the IPTA (Indian People's Theatre Association). First came /abanbandi, then Bijon Bhattacharya's bombshell **Nabanna**. They showed me that, in terms of immediate and spontaneous communication, theatre is much more effective than literature. So I gave up writing stories and turned to writing plays and organizing theatrical groups.

Then came another bit of heart searching. It was after my greatest success on stage—a prestige performance staged in the Jadavpur University campus in 1950, to coincide with the

convocation inaugurated by President Radhakrishnan. I produced Tagore's **Bisharjan** in which I also played the leading role. More than 8,000 persons attended the show. « was fantastic!

But this also showed me that I could only reach a maximum of 10,000 people through such a show. And so much collective labour had to be expended just for that! Then I decided to make fdms.

q. Did you realize your ambition through the film medium?

R.G. Looking back I can say that I have no love lost with the film medium. I just want to convey whatever I feel about the reality around me and I want to shout. Cinema still seems to be the ideal medium for this because it can reach umpteen billions once the work is done. That is why I produce fdms—not for their own sake but for the sake of my people. They say that television may soon take its place. It may reach out to millions more. Then I will kick the cinema over and turn to T.V.

q. Can you recall any particular influence that inspired you to be a film-maker?

R.G. Well, there were films like Eisenstein's **Battleship Potemkin**, Pudovkin's *Mother*, *Krakatit* the Czechoslovakian film *Nema Barikada* by Otakar Vavra and books like Eisenstein's, *Film Form*, and *The Film Sense*, Pudovkin's *Film Technique* and *Film Acting*. Ivor Montagu's collection of film articles in the Penguin series, and Bela Balasz's *Theory of the film*, all of which threw up a completely new world before my eyes.

Most of the films which I have mentioned were banned in India at that time. We could only see them clandestinely. That also gave a romantic aura to the whole experience. And then came the first Film Festival in India which introduced us to the Italian neo-realists. This was yet another completely new and fascinating world.

All these films and books helped to develop my tastes, but they did not influence me directly. I did not become a part of any school.

Q. These persons you have mentioned, are they the greatest cineastes in your opinion?

R.G. They are not cineastes and they are not dilettantes. They are more or less pioneers in exploring this exciting medium. Eisenstein, Pudovkin, and, in a way, Dovshenko discovered a new artistic language in films. The first two were not only film makers,

but were also among the first film theorists of the world. Film makers anywhere owe a debt especially to Eisenstein. He gave us a whole new medium of expression.

Q. Films are still perhaps the most exciting mass medium in the world today. But few directors have cared to explore its vast possibilities. Which directors or schools of film-making, in your opinion, have been exceptionally successful?

R.G. In my opinion Sergei Yukteovich and Louis Bunuel are the very greatest. But Yukteovich died recently and Bunuel, in disgust, has stopped making films as a protest against the commercialisation of this great art form. Jean-Luc Godard says that as long as film-making is not as cheap as pen and paper in this bourgeois world, good films cannot be made. I last heard about him a few months ago from a French journalist. He has stopped making films and whiles away his time on the boulevards of Paris and in doing party-work.

Then there is a Japanese school. I am not talking about export quality Film directors such as Akira Kurosawa but of directors like Mizoguchi. Ozu and Tanaka. Now there are some promising young directors among them, such as Nagisa Oshima.

In South America we have Leopold Torre Nilson: in Greece there is Michael Cacoyannis and, of course, in Sweden there is Ingmar Bergman. I don't set much store by the so-called underground cinema of America, or by the British school, or by the clinically disinfected realism of poverty produced by directors such as Satyajit Ray. There is also a wave of pornographic films, which makes me furious.

There may be other notable film makers but since the scope for seeing the latest works from abroad is almost non-existent in our country, I may have missed many remarkable works of art.

Q. I notice that you have not included the Italian school or the controversial 'nouvelle vague' movement.

R.G. Well, the Italian school seems to me to be a spent force. After the Italian spark of neo-realism, which ultimately turned into fantastic realism in the hands of great masters like Federico Fellini, Antonioni, Luchino Visconti and others, it has very little else to offer. The same is true of the Polish school led by Andrej Wajda and others. In the hands of people like Roman Polanski, it tended to go towards a sort of new-existentialism. Polanski has rightly found his heaven in Hollywood.

About the *nouvelle vague*, the French have a peculiar fascination for giving a label and a name to anything and everything. To me the term *nouvelle vague*..is a very vague and fuzzy label to attach to fdms like Truffaut's 'Quatre Cents Coups' and the Resnais-Robbe-Crillet production 'L'annee *Derniere a Marienbad* both in the same breath. They are as different as can be. So I cannot accept this as a school. But many of these film makers are most powerful, there is no doubt about that. I do not know what the East-European countries are doing.

Q. Well, you are aware of what Indian film makers are doing. How high would our films rate as creative works?

R.G. I am a very bad cinema-goer. I rarely see films, yet, from the few that I have seen, I would say that Bengali films have stopped making any progress. Our new film makers are wallowing in the mire with maudlin tears and horse opera.

But in other parts of India, including Bombay, a new generation of film-makers are showing signs of promise. I can think of people like Shyam Benegal. Kumar Sahani, and Mani Kaul from Bombay: Satyadev Dubey from Poona; Sathyu of Karnataka. and John Abraham among others from Kerala. There is a movement in Bengal as well, but it is being stifled by commercialism.

Q. But what about acting potential? Has the Indian film industry never produced actors and actresses with the kind of calibre that merits international recognition?

R.G. To be very candid, apart from a few matinee idols and some names who are a momentary craze, nothing has come up in the Indian cinema by way of acting. We cannot conceive of a Bondarchuk, or of a Toshiro Mifune, or of a Giulietta Masina for that matter, in our country's context.

To begin with, film acting is born of a deep rapport between director and actors which is sadly missing in India. Secondly, film acting is completely dependent on the placement of camera, lighting and, above all, editing. None of our actors and actresses have ever evinced the slightest desire to master these arts, without which film acting in the true sense is just not possible.

When I see our great actors and actresses plodding through yards of celluloid, I am reminded of an elephant in a snow drift trying to dance. They come here to make money, and by jiminy, they make it! This is the be-all and end-all of everything. This is not ACTING!

Q. Apart from the acting, which you dismiss as so thoroughly gross, and the incredibly superficial plot structure of most of our film today, one of the more vehemently criticized features of our commercial films is the peculiar trait of our matinee idols of breaking into song at the slighted pretext.

R.G. Yes, that's true.

Q. But with all your anti-philistine contempt, how do you justify the use of the same technique in almost all your films?

R.G. You see I agree with Jean-luc Godard that anything which seems to an artist to be capable of conveying his message is entirely valid—be it song or dance or newspaper headlines or commentaries or just about anything! Artistic validity is the only criterion.

Besides, in our country from time immemorial songs have played a very important part in all our creative arts. If these dream-merchants misuse them today, that is no reason why I should refrain from using them in my films. In fact, I have a script ready based on a Bengali folk tale in which I have discarded all dialogue and have used about 25 songs, apart from several poems. I have also gone to the other extreme in another script, which I propose to film in Bombay. This will not only be devoid of songs, but will have no dialogue either—only distorted noises and background music. It is the story of a deaf-mute girl-child of the Koli tribe of Maharashtra.

So I have no particular fascination for songs. In my first released film, *Ajantrik*, there were no songs. I did not feel the necessity for them in that film. But wherever I have felt the necessity, I have never hesitated to use them.

Q. You have eight feature films and over 10 short films to your credit. Which of these have you personally found the most satisfying? and why?

R.G. This is difficult to answer, but to date four films of mine have satisfied me most: *Ajantrik*, because of its brevity of expression and for certain technical achievements; *Subarna Fiekha*, which I feel is my most philosophical film; *Titas Ekti Nadir Nam*, which is an essay on the lyricism of the Bengali countryside, specially its monsoons, and because I think I have been able to portray certain hefty labour-class characters who are intensely Bengali; and *Komal Gandhar* because in it I have tried to discard the normal story line and to propound my proposition on four

levels at the same time.

Q. But you have now made a come-back to the theatre. After all these satisfactory experiments with the film medium and your plans for some rather unusual ventures, and after your initial switch from the stage to cinema in order to reach out to a larger audience, how do you justify your return to the theatre?

R.G. Well, let's say this reversion is a kind of intellectual exercise in my old age. It gives me a kind of human pleasure and human warmth. The theatre helps to establish a mutual give-and-take between the audience and the writer that is not found in any other media. This is the secret of my inspiration. Besides I want to sound my people, so that it can enrich my future contribution to the cinema.

Q. You have worked both in films and in the theatre. Where do you find the greatest difference between these two media?

R.G. The two are widely different media. One cannot equate their idioms, though these sometimes tend to merge.

The secret of good film-making is editing. This calls for an uncanny sense of timing. Satyajit Ray is the only director in India who has it.

Film-making is a highly mechanical process, where sudden bursts of imagination or inspiration are virtually non-existent. It is veritably a matter of emotion recollected in tranquillity; that is, everything is planned out long before the actual process of filming.

In this sense, a film director is almost a dictator. But this is not so with theatre. A 'regisseur' (stage manager-director) can only lay down the guidelines for his artistes. Once the curtain goes up he has no part to play any more. It is the artiste who creates the performance, while the stage director only sits in the sidelines.

Q. Have you never considered the immense possibilities of experimenting with an artiste's acting potential, as Grotowski and his followers are doing, with remarkable results?

R.G. I have had no touch with drama for over 19 years, apart from producing a few radio plays. Frankly speaking, I have never thought about theatre during this span of time.

Now that I have decided to return to the stage, I think I have been much influenced by Brecht. I have translated some of his plays from the English to Bengali. I have only seen Brecht's production of *Mother Courage* in a full-length documentary film

of the Berliner Ensemble's stage production. I have read a few of his articles, and, of course, his most important theoretical writing, the 'Organon'.

Since I have never been outside India, I have of necessity only this second-hand knowledge, but whatever I have learnt has moulded my way of thinking. I must add, however, that when I get down to producing a play, I naturally do not mean to bog myself down to a particular theory. When I get the chance, I will experiment and evolve a form of my own.

Q. What in your opinion, are the more fruitful theatre movements in India today?

R.G. On a national level, India has no theatre movement as such. There are stray attempts by people like Tendulkar on the Marathi stage, and there are vigorous movements evolving in Karnataka, Patna and Delhi. A new generation of Hindi writers and artistes is emerging with several novel and exciting ideas.

Only in Bengal is there a distinct theatre movement of sorts. Socially-conscious young men and women, and proponents of the so-called absurd theatre, are experimenting extensively. The Bengalis are a very self-conscious people and the most hopeful point about this movement is that it is no longer confined to Calcutta. It has spread to the districts and industrial towns, and even to the villages. The professional stage has had to sit up and take notice. It has reacted in two typical ways. One is with sex and cheap humour. Every second play now contains a cabaret scene or more and stops just short of nudity. The other includes experiments with new theatrical ideas. It is only outside the plane of commercial theatre that very exciting attempts are being made.

Q. Do you think that any of these attempts have been particularly successful?

R.G. In a way Sharnbhu Mitra has made a breakthrough. Bijon Bhattacharya has attempted remarkable plays, but he needs a good producer, then there is Utpal Dutta of course. For me, whatever his faults, Utpal remains the best stage-producer Bengal has seen to date. He is also a good satirist; his plays are well received, and he himself is an actor of no mean order.

All these people are of our generation. I cannot really opine on individuals of the present generation, but, as I have said, some of their plays and productions are very good.

Q. You talk rather contemptuously of how the professional

theatre has gone in for the exploitation of sex. This evokes another controversy about whether sex, nudity and kissing are justified in drama and on the celluloid screen, what would you say to this as a writer, actor, and director?

R.G. I neither support nor discard it. It is a very infantile question. I do not understand why people are so much worked up about this.

In art, everything is valid. The important question is whether the people who vehemently support things like nudity and kissing do this out of consideration for art. Or do they want to make quick money? At the same time I would like the fiercely orthodox keepers of our Indian culture to visit our ancient caves and temples and see for themselves how our forefathers treated the subject.

The crux of the matter is that, in this profit-making society, all those who are for or against, have their own individual axes to grind. None of them is either a disinterested critic, or a true lover of art. So I do not want to get involved in this rat-race.

Q. You obviously feel that film-making for pecuniary gain or audience entertainment is absolutely heinous. Do you think this powerful mass medium should be used instead for reformist propaganda and active proselytizing, in the way some of our rather well known film makers have done—often at the cost of art?

R.G. I am quite old-fashioned about this. Tagore once said, art has to be beautiful. But before that, it has to be truthful.

Now what is truth? There is no eternal truth. Every artist has to learn his own private truth through a painful personal process. And this is what he has to convey.

There is no such thing as yet in the world called a class-less art. The reason: there is no class-less society. Every work of art is relative, and it is in relation to man. All art worth its name must work for the betterment of man.

I do not believe in any rigid theory, but at the same time I am quite amazed at those so-called 'great' film makers, who are fundamentally nothing but dilettantes who clamour about the art of human relationships. It is a very clever way of evading one's social responsibility. What they practice only goes to serve the purpose of their establishment. They are as partisan as can be, but wear a mask of nonpartisanship. I detest this kind of slogan.

Q. What is your privately-earned truth that has inspired your

stories, films and plays?

R.G. Being a Bengali from east Pakistan. I have seen the untold miseries inflicted on my people in the name of independence—which is a fake and a sham. I have reacted violently to this and even in my last film, which is yet to be released (*Jukti Takko Ar Gappo*) I have tried to portray different aspects of this. I am also aware of a complete break-down of moral values around me, specially among the younger generation of today. My next film, which will be called *Shey Bishnupriya*, deals with this problem. My recent play is based on the same theme.

Interview (2)

Q. What, in your opinion, is the role of an artiste, particularly that of a cinema artiste?

R.G. I am not an artiste, nor am I a cinema artiste. Cinema is no art form to me. It is only a means to the end of serving my people. I am not a sociologist, and hence, I do not harbour illusions that my cinema can change the people. No one film-maker can change the people. The people are too great. They are changing themselves. I am not changing things, I am only recording the great changes that are taking place. Cinema for me is nothing but an expression. It is a means of expressing my anger at the sorrows and sufferings of my people. Tomorrow, beyond cinema, man's intellect may probably rear something else that may express the joys, sorrows, aspirations, dreams and ideals of the people with a force and immediacy stronger than that of the cinema. That would then become the ideal medium.

Q. Since your films reflect an intense political awareness, is it true to say that you are the first political film-maker in India?

R.G. I don't know. Why do you ask me this type of question? How I can test myself in this position? It is for my audience to decide whether I am a political film-maker at all, whether I am the first political film-maker, the only film-maker, it's all up to them to decide. In a broader context, all films are political, as all art is, as all artistes are. It is either of this or that class. One film-maker may give it the name political, another may not, but ultimately it all serves the same purpose. Cinema, being what it is, also serves politics through its varied forms and genres.

Q. What is your opinion about the modern tendencies in the cinema, particularly the thinking that emotional identification with the film's characters is a bourgeois pastime, that the director should break this illusion of reality and come out and speak to the audience?

R.G. There is nothing modern about this. This has existed from Lime immemorial. Have you read Aristophanes? He was born and died 2500 years ago in a city called Athens. He did it. Therefore there is nothing modern about it. **There** are forms and forms. This is one kind of form and somebody like Jean-Luc Godard is practicing it. Don't forget there is nothing modern about it. Many of our epics are full of this—of their authors coming out and talking to the people. This is also the very purpose of our 'Jatras'. In art nothing is modern, everything is modern. If someone takes credit for having done something very 'modern' he is a fool, and he lives in a fool's paradise. Art eternally goes on changing forms, and all kinds of forms have been applied, experimented with and exhausted, we are all only re-inventing it. that is all.

Q. How have our mythological and dramatic traditions influenced you in particular and the Indian cinema in general?

R.G. There is an epic tradition which dominates the Indian mentality. It has seeped into the Indian subconscious. It is no surprise, therefore, that Indians are attracted to mythologicals. I am a part of it. I cannot think of myself without the epic tradition. I am all for it. It is in our civilization since time immemorial. In my films I rely mainly on the folk form. The Great Mother image in its duality exists in every aspect of our being. I have incorporated this in *Meghe Dhaka Torn* and also in *lukti Toke ArGappo*.

Q. Which film-maker has influenced you most?

R.G. Sergei Eisenstein. He has not only influenced me, but all the film-makers worth their salt. He is the father of the cinema. Griffith is there, of course, but Griffith's was a mild affair. It was Eisenstein who theorised the whole thing. It was he who gave us this language. Before him there was Edwin Porter—*The Great Train Robbery*—and then Griffith. But these two were blind film-makers. Sergei Eisenstein first caught hold of the damn thing and tried to teach us the rudiments of film-making. He found out what film is. what this damn camera thing does. He is the Kalidas of the cinema the theoretician and the creator. There are film-makers galore. There were, are, and will be great and

excellent film-makers all over the world but they are just derivatives from Sergei Eisenstein. Eisenstein stands above all. Anywhere there is film, the film-maker is only the child of Eisenstein. for he is the guardian, the father—he is Adam, the primeval Adam of the cinema, the first man.

q. Rabindra Sangeet has an important functional role in most of your films. Could you explain your affinity to Rabindranath Tagore?

r.G. I cannot speak without him. That man has culled all my feelings long before my birth. He has understood what I am and he has put in all the words. I read and I find that all has been said and I have nothing new to say. I think all artistes, in Bengal at least, find themselves in the same difficulty. It just cannot be helped. You can be angry with him, you can criticize him, you may dislike him. but ultimately in the final analysis, you will find that he has the last word.

q. In spite of the considerable influence Rabindranath Tagore on you, we find that there is a qualitative difference between the works of Tagore and your films. Don't you think that he was excessively romantic?

r.G. Romantic! What do you know about him? Rabindranath is not a romantic, his is a completely variegated affair. He is the performing monkey of Bengali literature. And you call him a romantic. Have you read 'Chaturanga'? He is a mystic, agnostic, everything. He was also a great rogue and a great one when it came to using vile language. He also wrote in the language used by street urchins. So do not try to avoid or side-track him as a romantic. Read the full range of the man's work. The structure of his writings is extremely tight. He is, as I said before, the performing monkey of Bengali literature. You must have noticed a toy which has a ladder and a small monkey on the top. When you hold this toy upright the monkey rolls down. When inverted it slides down again. Rabindranath is like this toy monkey. He can get to the top, step by step, and climb upside down as well. So, it is a great blunder to label him a romantic. There are some people who want to sell Rabindranath, and that is why you have this image of him impressed on your minds. You people have not read Rabindranath. You are yet to know of his anger. From the lowest rung of society to the highest he spared none. You may call me a rogue, a rascal, but he was a greater one. Mav be lie knew more

four-letter words than I do. Do not have a distorted notion about him.

Q. The refugee problem has been a recurring theme in most of your films. Do you think this problem has a direct relevance to the film you have made in Bangladesh called *Titas Ekti Nadir Nam* ?

R.G. It doesn't affect me directly. It does in a broader sense, in an indirect way. in a subliminal way. Film-making is a question you know, of your subconscious, your feeling of reality. I have tackled the refugee 'problem', as you have used the term, not as a refugee problem. To me it was the division of a culture and I was shocked. During the partition period I hated these pretentious people who clamoured about our independence, our freedom. You kids are finished, you have not seen that Bengal of mine. I just kept on watching what was happening, how the behaviour pattern was changing due to this great betrayal of national liberation. And I probably gave vent to what I felt. Today I am not happy, and whatever I have seen unconsciously or consciously comes out in my films. My films may have been ridden with expressive slogan-mongering or they may be remote. But the cardinal point remains: that I am frustrated with what I see all around me, I am tired of it.

Q. Do you think that there is any talent among the young filmmakers in this country, or is the Indian New Wave only so much noise?

R.G. Yes. there are some talents but I think they are misguided. I am not talking of Calcutta. Calcutta, in my opinion, is totally barren. I cannot point out a single boy in Calcutta and say that he is doing something. But in Bombay, in Kerala, in Kashmir, even in Assam, there are young boys who are doing something. Satyadev Dubey has potential but he did a very foolish thing. He took up a good script. But on a flimsy set-up. I told him: 'Why waste so much energy and rfioney on a loafter. Why *Shantata* Court *Chalu Ahe*? Why not something more basic to the people's life? I pin my faith on Kumar Sahani and John Abraham. Moni Kaul is there too. but he has a tilt in his brain, slightly astigmatic, just like boys like you—always falling in love with words. Kumar Sahani is my best student. When he comes out with his films, it will be staggering.

Nazarin

From collaboration with Salvador Dali to *Viridiana*, Bunuel's progress is amazing. He has continued to change. That is a sure sign of his vitality. He has grappled with the most significant problems of his milieu and age valiantly and constantly.

Nazarin is one of the major films that I have had good fortune to see. Here Bunuel is dealing with some problems of primary importance in the culture that he belongs to. On the level of sheer filmic construction it is a very competent film. But the level of competence achieved is not beyond many other good film-makers.

Certain of the interiors and exteriors,—specially in the slum sequence, are not as evenly matched as one wishes them to be. My point is, the film is positively shabby at places: as if the maker does not care to be scrupulous on the elementary level. He seems eminently able to afford such shabbiness.

The actor in the part of the central figure, though admirable at many places, seemed to me to be inadequate in his conveying of the makers' intentions. That became particularly and painfully clear to me in the last shot of the film. That way, handling of the sound track is much more exciting. The incidental noises fulfil all the tasks of musical score extremely well. Use of drums to bring in the sudden feeling of exalted revelation at the end has a literally stunning effect. It leaves one's music-hungry ears, with its sudden appearance, completely breathless.

But these factors are not of prime consideration to me. To me it is a considerable film because of the theme and the exposition of

it. Because of this masterly handling of one of the most basic of human themes, the film attains a height which is seldom scaled by many a more pretentious film.

The universal theme of the 'Persecution of the Fool', which 'recurs throughout the human history and human thought has never been allowed in the film to reduce itself to the level of allegory.

The cross-reference to Jesus of Nazareth with this film 'concerning Nazario' is oblique and never vulgarly simple.

The idea of 'Itinerant Priest' (Friars, Druids,—one can elongate the line from middle ages to the age of stone-henge) is taken up in the film and the substratum of Mystery and Miracle is interwoven with it with truly artistic sensibility which never allows anything to be carried to its logical conclusion or to be too schematic or obvious. One is reminded of Joan of Arc, that archetypal heretic, at many places—specially in that typically medieval scene of the plague. And Bunuel with a sharp sabre-thrust, juxtaposes it with the dying lovers' repeated call for her 'Juan', a profoundly human touch. The Inquisition also brings in that medieval atmosphere.

The figure of Beatrice brings in a necessary theme of Possessed Woman, who has transferred the urge for the Divine to a very natural urge of a healthy normal Woman for her Hero, including sublimated sexual overtones. When her real attachment is revealed to her brutally, she reconciles herself,—after a burst of hysteria,—to the inevitable as a natural catharsis. The harlot-cum-murderess wins the race. She is actually one of those chosen few who are really and completely detached. Her secret lies in her natural reactions to objects of love and hate, her every-day-ness.

These three figures romp through the film as in a medieval pageant. And Bunuel achieves one of the most successful frontal attacks on the established order to persecution of the minds of men in his part of the world,—the Roman Catholic Complex. But he is blessed with an adversary too solid, too organized, too palpable.

India (specially, modern Bengal) though notoriously religious-minded, does not offer such a sitting duck.

That does not mean Bunuel has not achieved a film which is as deeply satisfying aesthetically, and as challengingly stimulating intellectually. The amazing thing is, he has done it within the frame-work of an emotionally stirring film in which the human

relationships are highly sensitively portrayed and significantly touched off into newer and newer constellations ever and anon.

I shall not forget that night in the ruins with the priest sitting, Beatrice sleeping, leaning on his shoulder, the prostitute crying out of human jealousy, and the toad crawling on the back-side of the palm of the priest. A serene height has been reached there. And a sense of peace,—which probably was the quest of this man,—or is it Bunuel himself?—Bunuel, the uncompromising, truthful man.

A book review:

Theory of Film by Dr. Sigfried Kracauer,
Oxford University Press, New York. 1960.

An Attitude To Life And An Attitude To Art

Dr. Kracauer is an eminent sociologist. The present book has been naturally written from the point of view of a sociologist. It has raised certain fundamental questions concerning matters about film. Necessarily, some pertinent assessment of the present-day social fabric has been posited.

The book mainly outlines a historical study of the growth of film through photography. The significance of film, its inherent tendencies and learnings are charted out with much erudition in the book and at the end Dr. Kracauer takes up his own position concerning his own attitude to the present age, questions of art in general and his theory of redemption of physical reality in films.

All his assessments stem from his own position as a socially aware theoretician.

We must understand his fundamental concept concerning life to understand his dicta concerning films. This review will mainly concentrate itself on his social concepts as it seems that they need closer scrutiny. And also, for persons placed in India today, detailed instances from his book cannot be judged either way as very few films that he mentions in his book can be seen here. So no proper judgement can be made upon this aspect on his book by

any reviewer here. And, strictly speaking, that is not necessary. The core of this book is his above-mentioned assessment of reality.

So let us see what he has to say.

I.

Dr. Kracauer declares that Western civilization has come very near to its end. With Spengler and Toynbee he agreed on this point. He rejects the possibility of any all enveloping unifying patterns of behaviours and reaction in the present age. Religion is out. Freud is thrown out of hand. Esoteric Eastern religions are from an era which was before the scientific revolution. Marx is not very important. Even Soviet fanaticism is bound to wane to the same ideological exhortation as the liberal democracies the moment it succeeds in achieving a state of well-being comparable to America's. (Of course, it does not matter to him whether that society in Soviet Union becomes classless or not by the time this allegedly supreme target is achieved.)

So, civilization has reached an ideological void.

His other main contention is that science, the more it becomes all-powerful, the more it makes our thinking abstract. This drift towards abstraction is enhanced by the technological advancements. So modern man sees a sunset—all about the sun and all about the atmosphere and all about the rotation of the earth, but he misses the radiance of the sunset.

Dr. Kracauer's panacea is that we need concretion. We are touching reality with our fingertips, but we must shake hands with it.

On these two fundamental assumptions. Dr. Kracauer bases his material aesthetics.

Dr. Kracauer has taken up this position, probably slightly hastily. His theory of void needs careful attention. We, who do not belong to the same cultural milieu as he, do accept that Western civilisation, with its Christianity, classicism and original sin, is doomed. We do believe that, by giving birth to the monstrous weapons of destruction it is on the verge of collapse. A breakdown of values we admit. We agree with Dr. Kracauer about the volte-face of Spengler and Toynbee and the prospect of annihilation.

But we do not believe in the total void that Dr. Kracauer arrives

at. Freud's self-contradictory, disguised concept of original sin Dr. Kracauer has seen. But why is he so strangely silent about Jung's collective unconscious, the archetypal images? As a sociologist we should expect him to ponder deeply on this psychic study of social history.

"Man's need to understand the world and his experience in it, symbolically as well as realistically, may be noted early in the lives of many children. The symbolic, imaginative view of the world is just as organic a part of a child's life as the view transmitted by the sense organs. It represents the natural and spontaneous striving which adds to man's biological bond a parallel and equivalent psychic bond, thus enriching life by another dimension—and it is eminently *this* dimension *that makes man what he is*. It *is the root of all* creative activity and is not fed by repressions (as psycho-analysis believes), but by the power of the initially imperceptible archetypes, working from out of the depths of the psyche and creating the realm of the spiritual." (C.G. Jung).

Man's spiritual make-up in Western civilization, and his needs, are fundamentally misunderstood in the book under review. The above quotation needs deep thought, specially by any serious student of the content in any art-form.

The civilisation of European peoples has come to its logical end. Its moral superstructure, its unifying forces are almost totally disintegrated. But, from long before this civilization came into being, the basic images were indelibly imprinted in the minds of all men. This collective memory cuts across the present day, or more recent boundaries of civilizations. The span here is much broader than embosomed in the visions of Spengler or Toynbee. It is the collective unconscious memory from the primeval age. A child, when he is born, carries with him sleeping primeval reflexes and images. Dr. Kracauer should have studied Jung's psychology of the unconscious. As the child grows up he becomes heir to the values, and the lack of it, of his milieu, and these archetypes continue to guide his emotions, sentiments and behaviours to an amazing degree.

To all artists (even artists engaged in film, a doubtful art), this storehouse is an endless source of all creation. All appreciation also is guided by it. All ripples on the leaves, all puddles reflecting invisible house facades and a piece of sky, all these

transient things are included in the complex of reactions born out of the social unconscious. All fairy tales, all fantasies, all tragedies are from the same source. It is the very meat of all art.

After all the ruins of ancient beliefs are not the ruins of very ancient archaeological remains, as a matter of fact.

The position of the unconscious in matters of all art should have been given much more, very much more importance by Dr. Kracauer.

II.

Now the question of the conscious intellectual level. There also the landscape is not as desolate as Dr. Kracauer makes it out to be. Of course, one concedes that Dr. Kracauer's immediate surroundings may be so.

To the author, the classlessness of society, is not at all important in human history. Dr. Kracauer has dragged in the Soviet Union (Marx is of course not as profound as Freud with his egoistic fundamental theory of individual man's sex impulses). That is why a slight reference to the socio-political landscape of today will not be out of place.

Dr. Kracauer should have mentioned the beliefs (presumably all pervading of Soviet Communistic fantasies. After presenting the case he could have rejected their pleas. The silence, and a casual reference to achieving a state of well-being **comparable to that of America's**, seems like a dig.

Now these Communist fellows say that mankind today in prehistory, history will begin with classlessness. The soviet space physicists claim that instead a whole new era is being unfolded before the mankind. By 1970 man will reach the moon, and then the universe is before him.

That conformation of man with his habitat, which is not earth but the solar system and then the whole galaxy of the Milky Way, will be of tremendously thrilling interest, these people claim. So here is a possible alternative to Dr. Kracauer's ruins, which may unify on the conscious intellectual level all the human beings of the earth who will gradually come to the same level of development within the course of a century or so.

Of course the great God nuclear bomb permitting. That is the latest hoodoo.

Dr. Kracauer can get hold of the party programme of the latest

Congress of the hated Communist Party of the Soviet Union. There in economic terms, is charted out a future society, which if at all it comes, will be of decisive importance in filling up the void in the brains of the intellectual of the West European civilization.

III.

Dr. Kracauer is very angry with abstraction because abstraction culls the essential of the generally prevailing aspects of many things and leaves out the individual traits of things.

Has man's brain ever done anything else? Is man's brain capable of encompassing anything in physical reality in its entirety. The object in reality starts in the human brain a subjective cerebration, however rudimentary the case may be. Dr. Kracauer has in his preface let us know that he has adapted in the present book the sensible procedure of disregarding the less essential ingredients and varieties of film to get at its core, but in the body of the book he attacks science and technology for doing the same in their own sphere. Slightly contradictory, is it not?

The point is, Dr. Kracauer is giving out here another symptom of the moribund nature of his civilization, of all that Western civilization has contributed to mankind, I submit. The science and technology which is the greatest, the best and the most glorious part of one's own civilization is being rejected here, however unconsciously, by one of its conscious representatives. Because fundamentally the case is simply this: the breakdown all around, the ruins, the mechanical contrivances, the hectic speed, the purposelessness, have made Dr. Kracauer sick and he is apportioning the blame to science, reason, radical liberals and technology.

As he has correctly guessed, the contribution of science and technology will remain, and will continue to further complicate modern man's everyday existence. Rightly and gloriously so. There is a lurking anarchic trait in the author's mind when he tries to cling to surface reality and momentary fleeting experiences of life. It is a modern version of the 18th century Rousseauesque clamour for noble savages.

The point is, man cannot think, feel or react without abstraction. It is not only science and technology—but from the very first day of his birth, man has continued to dwell in abstraction.

IV.

The question of surface reality.

Dr. Kracauer claims that the camera can and should record only surface reality in order to be on its own.

This reviewer has not had the good fortune of having a whole archive to himself or all the facilities that the Museum of Modern Art, Film section, New York, can offer. Very few films that Dr. Kracauer has mentioned in his book have ever come to this part of the world. But the little that has been seen gives out an entirely different picture. Let me ask the readers some questions.

When Anita Ekberg howls like a dog at dead of night in front of Marcello Mastroianni in *La Dolce Vita*, or when the night club floor-show clarinet player plays Pide Piper of Hamelin beckons to Marcello, are they signifying only surface reality?

In Satyajit Ray's *Aparajito*, there is a shot where Apu stands before a puddle where some dots are reflected from the dark sky and Apu whispers, 'Orion'. Those who have read Bibhuti Bandopadhyay, who is the primary source, and in whose numerous works this constellation of Orion recurs regularly—and those of us who are from the same cultural complex and who know the implication of this constellation in our tradition—will have a reaction which will largely be not understood outside, and which is not just scratching the surface of things. When the convulsing protagonist in Wajda's *Ashes and Diamonds* lies bleeding on the burnt earth of Poland and dies, it is again the same story.

Examples can be multiplied endlessly. The point is, here also abstraction starts operating. The moment an artist selects a frame, lays out his plan of montage, he has already started reshaping his raw material. His soul has entered there. A single composition is as finite as any Senecan tragedy. It is bound by the conscious and unconscious of the artist. Any puddle anywhere, reflecting anything, is meant as an instrument for channelising the spectator's reactions to a prearranged goal. Any sunset caught by me and by you will be two totally different sunsets evoking different reactions.

This is not to minimize Dr. Kracauer's very valuable assessment of the camera's ability to hold and perpetuate ephemeral reality, but the privileges of cinema are being turned into fetishes and.

jargons, this reviewer thinks.

Film will continue to hold such ephemeral reality, but Paul Valéry would be glad to find Anita Ekberg going on howling like dogs. The involuntary twitching of a pain-stricken face will be balanced by the high sense of doom of *Rashomon*. The admitted crudeness of Hitchcock thrillers should not be valued for its alleged showing of surface reality.

Dr. Kracauer is totally right when he says that, in films there is an avenue for going from below to above. But not the only avenue, and with so much gossip of surface reality for its own sake.

V.

Dr. Kracauer's book is based upon a totally lop-sided thesis. His fundamental assessment of present-day reality is a partial and partisan assessment. It does not want to or is not able to encompass the whole of reality as prevailing today. His sense of doom and hopelessness has made him despair. He wants to go back to fleeting moments of tranquillity and peace. All his almost poetic instances, which abound in the book, talk of peace, freedom from care and worry and the feeling of being lost. This would be understandable if Dr. Kracauer were a film-maker. It would have been an admirable temperament, but these are his private worries which he has tended to impose upon all of us as a theorist.

Perhaps all theories of this nature are bound to be so. One's own shortcomings, one's own surroundings, are bound to condition one's judgement. Perhaps one should not theorise. Perhaps one should be aware of limitations that are imposed on one. That is why Dr. Kracauer is much more successful in the first part of the book than in the latter.

Sometimes, one writes a book which bristles with quotations and instances, but which does not achieve much more than an air of pomposity.

Appendix

About Oraons (Chotonagpur)

(i)

Probably Oraons are the only tribe still remaining in Middle India who have still retained their power to express their mental ecstasy through the primal medium of dancing. Thousands of years of oppression, involving waves of migration again and again, swindling and torture by the higher and more cultured brethren of the land and other lands, poverty, lack of health and the easy way of living—nothing could completely wipe out that trace of irrepresible joy which bursts forth in rhythm. They have been told again and again, and that flow of advice is by no means absent even today. That it is not just proper to break into dancing at the slightest excuse. It is a thing which is not cultured. It is aboriginal, it reminds one of one's own sins in another narrow and criminal society.

All these are successful to a large extent. The Oraons today are not what they were even fifty years ago. And if this goes on, after a decade they will not be what they are today. This is the most sad fact touching the tribals at the present moment. But more of it later.

(2)

Oraons are essentially an agricultural people. True, they still retain customs and memory of a past in which hunting was vigorously pursued. Among Indian tribes, they only know how to make and use that highly developed weapon, the boomerang (DABSU LEBDU). But hunting is a subsidiary in their agrarian

economy. And history furnishes proof that this peace-loving and extremely friendly people won the land wherever they went, not by martial prowess but by the plough. When they came clown to the jungles of Chotonagpur after being driven out of Rohtas fort (Ruidasgarh). in more recent historical times, their present habitat was already occupied mainly by the great tribe of Mundas. Oraons became the dominant people, not by giving battle, but by being friendly to others and clearing the jungle and by making the earth bounteous with their better implements of agriculture. Abundant evidence of this harmony with nature and man around him is found in the folk-tales, songs, and places of historic interest lying around the villages both of Oraons and Mundas.

And hence, the key to Oraon culture is to be found in this vocation of life, agriculture.

(3)

This does not mean that they do not have a martial heritage, they have. These peaceful people have found it impossible to go on tolerating oppression throughout its history. In the past 300 years, they have risen in revolt again and again, first against the Moghuls and then against British rule. These Civilized rulers always sent their jagirdars, moneylenders and unscrupulous traders into their territory. And the army was always just a step behind them. Oraons came, felled the trees, cleared the jungle, fertilised and furrowed the earth, and received yields. Then came landlords and claimed lands and taxes. The uncivilized ones tolerated this as long as they could, and then moved on to further regions only to be followed by the ravens. These moneylenders and traders came, and broke the harmonious economy and magnificent art of the Oraons. When the yoke became unbearable, the Oraons rose in one grand gesture to resist. They were mowed down by superior killing machines. This process has gone on for a long time, probably from the time of the Vedas—the last rising was under Birsa Bhagwan (Birsa Munda).

(4)

The impact of propagation by religious missionaries, not only western, but indigenous as well, came into our purview as far as fragments of alien culture are found among Oraons. All their art is at a highly mixed stage. But, like the sun's rays through broken

clouds, —we can perceive a healthy, ever young, primeval pattern of culture which takes us back thousands and thousands of years into the dim twilight region of prehistory.

The study of their past from the standpoint of Indian historiography as a whole has not been taken up seriously as yet. But indications are there, indications of far-reaching significance. Indications pointing to a link with the protohistoric civilization of Indus Valley of 3000 B.C.. and through it with the prehistoric culture of West Baluchistan, and perhaps the Sun Valley culture. The famous Indus Valley design of the inverted leaf motif found profusely in pottery and seals is still a living tradition (or was 50 years ago) among the art of the Oraons. This is just one, there are other, links.

(5)

Let us try to shift and pick out those aspects of their culture which take us directly back to the day when this ancient people were young—which grew out of spontaniety, out of evolution of life itself.

In one word, let us seek out the remnants of original culture which may throw a glimpse, although a very vague and diffused one, into that prehistoric past. Let the curtain of millennia, uncover a little to show a piece of life in its pristine glory.

Echoes of it can be found in the system of dormitories for boys and girls, in the curious custom of Totems, in the allied custom of Parha flags, in the seasonal jatras, and above all—in the dances.

Everything begins with dances here, continues interwoven with it and ends where tired feet end.

(6)

So the dances. It is here that we will find the reflection of life, of the dawn and probably of the evening glow.

A point to remember. Analysis, even today, of their songs and dances will show their origin clearly. It is probably something like this.

Emotions surge in the mind of a primitive individual or a primitive collective with a strong unhindered impact. The expression of this strong emotion is also equally strong. The voice and feet develop sound and motion. And, in a collective which is the be all and end all of all primitive society, this expression has a

spontaneous tendency to be rhythmic, harmonious. It is so because many are involved always—the unit is collective and not an individual.

But a stage comes when sponataneity, the state of not being aware, gives place to awareness, to organization. Again, the reason is that collective.

And soon this expression under strong emotion becomes directed towards a definite end.

To delve deeper in search of these definite ends will carry us into the study of the psychology of primitive people. Sufficient to say here, the complex spiral has many ingredients from now on. Sometimes, it is pantomimic representation of such incidents in their own lives as excite the intense feeling of pleasure. Sometimes it develops magical significances, this stylised pantomime. The theory invariably is of sympathetic magic, such as rain-making—which sets off the cycle of existence in an agrarian society—*let the earth* drink deep, *let her be fruitful, let her nourish* her children.

But all this apart, we witness in a symbolic way this birth of a dance even today. When the drum start beating, the young lady standing shyly in a corner goes into a trance slowly. The rhythm intoxicates the blood in her veins, it is irresistible—waves of rhythm start rippling on her swaying body and imperceptibly she is in the midst of a high tempo. This birth of a dance among Oraons is sight to see: once seen it is never forgotten.

(7)

A few words about some important things. The village dormitory for the boys is the centre of collective activity in a collective minded society. This dormitory, which is called DHUMKURIA or JONKH-ERPA is highly interesting and details about it are to be found at the end of this paper. Our dances are generally done on the Akhra or yard before DHUMKURIA which is almost always situated in the centre of the village. In the dormitory are kept the Nagara Muduls, RUNJ, BHENR, NARSINHA, GUGUCHU or JOROTORO, life in the Dhumkuria is highly interesting from the point of view of Anthropology and sociology. But almost all important things are celebrated by dancing. So the Akhra can hold centre of stage and yet can show the workings of the dormitory.

The girls also have a dormitory, which is called PEL-ERPA, and whose location is supposed to be secret. Its workings are different from the boy's, excepting the erotic side of it.

Now about TOTEMS. Totemistic clans are found among other tribals of India, such as Bisonhum Marias of Baster among Austro-Asiatic tribes—and among kohyak and Sema Nagas of Nefa among mongoloid tribes.

But the distinguishing features of Oraons are that they have anthropomorphic or zoomorphic representations of these totems which are kept in the dormitories. Curiously enough, this primitive custom is frozen at a certain stage of development—they have the totem but they do not worship or attach much magical significance to it. It is a sacred ornamentation which they bring out and carry at the head of processions during the magnificent seasonal hunting jatras.

It is the PARHA FLAG that is the sacred and worshipped symbol of the village. It has replaced the totem according to a curious transformed-sanctity process. Every village has a separate design for its flag. The greatest show of brotherhood that an Oraon community is capable of, is presentation of the village Parha-BAIRAKIII to a neighbouring village. This is a glorious custom which calls for a well advertised jatra where many gather and dancing continues for the whole night.

(ATRAS. specially the Inter-Parha ones like Magh jatra are notable features of Oraon life. They serve two apparent purposes: one. they are an attempt at a tribal union, where thoughts are exchanged and intermingling is such as to develop oneness of feeling. Two, it is the place to throw together marriagable couples. Here boys and girls of a village are able to meet others from another village. Marriage being exogamous, this greatly facilitates the matchmaking.

Now, something about religion. Other religions, specially Hinduism, though it was by no means a one-way traffic, have very much mixed up the original pantheistic ancestor-worshipping magico-religious systems with extraneous elements. DHARMES is their supreme God (probably the Bengali rural DHARMATHA-KIJR has a kinship with it). Ancestors pervade their religious thought, as an instance, HARBARI JATRA can be cited.

And of course, their main vocation, agriculture, is almost the sole concern of all rites along with fertility among humanity.

The earth is loved. BANGARI, BHELOA PUJA, KARAM. KALIHANI PUJA, NAWAKHANI—all are connected with the earth and cultivation.

KOHA BENJA is the marriage of village priest. MAHATO with DHARTI. the earth. The Mahato stands for the Sun God, and this marriage ensures fertility of the earth. This precedes the human marriages of the season. SARHUL is the festival which is celebrated in this connection.

(8)

We come to Dances now. As we have observed, it is the dances that keep the rhythm of Oraon life. The cycle of the seasons is reflected in the variegated dance festivals all the year round. It is extremely difficult to find an order in the everflowing complex dances of Oraons. Let us start out from an arbitrarily chosen period. We will only enumerate merely the important ones, and will refrain from giving any descriptions of complex dance movements that are involved. Only the point to remember is that each dance is a distinct entity. The choreography, grouping, alignment of dancers and players etc., are quite rudimentary, but they are all there, monotony and repetition within a single dance form are of course evident, but difference between the forms are extremely marked.

These dances are meant to be continued for hours, if not for nights and days. Each dance takes some time to hold the mood of dancers, but when it does, the hold is total. That is the moment when tribal dance is at its best. Individuals submerge in the collective, rhythm and dust kicked up by the tripping feet intoxicate you, reason is numbed, only feeling remains. This is what these dances are meant for. They cannot be enacted, least of all in an urban, a different atmosphere.

From December to March is the time of wedding in the society. Harbari jatra and Kaha Benja are held at this period.

This is the time for JADUR dances.

jadur is the dance of courtship, the amorous youthful play of love, that mysterious urge is expressed through the rhythmic going forward and come back. When you watch, the commenting becomes apparent to you.

Phagu festival, the invocation of spring, falls almost at the end

of this period. All marriages are stopped for about a month up to the Sarhul festival in April when the Sun God is married to the Earth, the supreme marriage.

Sarhul dance starts at this time. It expresses joy at the divine marriage, probably human ones are also remembered by the dancers through that one marriage.

In summer comes the time for Kharia dances. Kharia is on the one hand, a dance of quiet joy and satisfaction—now that the mad quest for a mate is over and the ceremony of marriage etc. is done, time has come for quiet enjoyment of life and the mind strays towards the avocation of daily life.

On the other hand, this dance has the vigour and thrust of hunters and warriors—this is a hunting and war dance as well. The dancers carry sticks and other weapons as if to go out hunting or to war.

After summer's heat comes rain, the most anxiously awaited season. The dance now is the magnificent Karam. Probably the most beautiful dance along with Jadur. You see the young girls enacting rain-making. Sowing seeds and reaping. And they pacify the earth with caressing motions—*the mother has given her yield, probably the child has snatched at it. let the mother earth not be angry.*

A branch of a sacred tree standing outside the village is broken and brought to the akhra by dancing girls and planted in the middle, and then their lyrical dance starts round and round it.

In September–November is the autumn dance, Chirdi-Kharia of Aghan. This is a more warlike variation of the martial Kharia dance of summer. The granaries are full, this is the traditional time for going out for warlike deeds.

And in this way all the seasons are ushered in and their presence celebrated. But apart from these main seasonal dances, there are various dances for various occasions. The more important ones are as follows:—

There are more or less 4 important ceremonial hunting expeditions or Jatras in different seasons. They are Bisu Sundra or Koha Shikar. Phagu Sundra, Jeth Shikar, and Sandhi Sundra in the new moon hunt in Magh. Among them, Bisu Sundra is the most important one.

During these expeditions, the totem is brought out and carried .it the head of the procession, and different activities of Shikar are

enacted through the motions of dancers.

There is a curious custom during Sandhi Sundra, when all males go out of the village, and womenfolk take over the workings while wearing men's dresses and generally make a nuisance of themselves all around.

Then there are the wonderful dances connected with a marriage. All the ceremonies of marriage are connected with some dances or other. The coming of the maidens of the groom's party with a young lady carrying decorated cans of paddy on a painted pitcher on her head—all dancing merrily,—and then the bride's party receiving them through dancing and raising the tempo to the highest pitch is unparallaled in its expression of playful jov.

This is BENJA NALNA.

Then the men folk of the bride's party do a dance called Paiki which is a mock war-dance. The motion of this dance indicates an old custom of the groom's snatching the bride after giving battle.

After the marriage, old women of the village dance with plough-share, hay and sickle in hand. This is supposed to be a satirical dance. The old hags are by no means sober when they dance, and the meaning that they very palpably put forward through the dance is by no means acceptable by the Censor Board.

Every puja has some dance or other connected with it. There are the social dances which have no magical significance attached to them. Only the girls, that also when they go out of the village, do a dance which they call Chali Bechna or Angan. It is a beautiful dance, but probably a bit sophisticated.

Then there is the famous Jhumer, which is secular in spirit, and amorous in mood. It is the traditional love-making dance.

Lujhri is a dance used as a variation in all occasions. It also has intricate patterns of motion.

There are others, such as Mathus which are more uncommonly used.

This is by no means an exhaustive list of all their dances or variations thereof. And Oraons are very adept at improvising newer forms for newer occasions. I have been present at a remote village where they have mingled Karam with Benja nalna and Sarhul to fit the occasion of receiving a very much honoured guest at their village. At every few steps they washed his feet and wiped

them ceremonially and in rhythm. And the songs also keep pace. There are very old compositions as well as improvised ones of very recent origin concerning major events. But that is a subject by itself.

—These dances create that atmosphere which suddenly makes you aware that you are witnessing a scene which is as old as the history of man in India. The tunes, the sound, the spectacle make you realise what vigour and joy of life is. They are precious because they invoke in you the primary emotions.

And they make you realize another point, the innate harmony of the tribal form of society. Work and relaxation, worship and pleasure, these are so intermixed and so well balanced, that the emotional disbalance, the greatest malady of civilized society, has very few chances to appear. Moreover, all age groups have a well defined and proper scope to take a place in the community. The feeling of neglect which comes with a certain age is totally absent in such a society. This intense pleasure of living checks the craving to go places, to have egoistic ambitions, by directing the individual's attention to what nature and man's harmonious surrounding offers.

Therein lies the one lesson, the message of the tribal societies, contentment, simplicity,—passionate love of life,—they are ingrained among them from the very birth.

0)

But to give only this picture of the Oraons, or for that matter any other tribal society, is to help develop another myth, the Noble Savage.

Unfortunately this balance and harmony is a most evanescent thing: like a delicate flower it withers at the slightest rude touch. And touched they are bound to get.

That is why the Oraons today are a most impoverished and haggard people. This is not the place to go into detail, but the fact is, even the dances and customs enumerated here are probably forgotten and fallen into oblivion by at least the majority of the Oraons. Some do not remember them, many have only names in their memories. And as the years are passing, the more this process gets into stride.

(10)

This sense of decay, this feeling of a tribe becoming extinct, is a very painful experience. One of the most colourful people have become or are becoming most drab, colourless and fourth-rate copies of ourselves. They have lost their fragrance to a very large extent.

We are at a loss to know what is to be done. But we see that this process of decay is being allowed to go on unhindered. Cartloads of them are being sent to tea-gardens even today, all the sharks are still taking advantage of their faithful nature, the different foreign and Indian missionaries are still drilling into their heads that whatever they possess has no value and offer instead, not the best but the most soul-less of our civilized dogmas.

The attitude of the powers that be is extremely superficial and smugly complacent. Some say, they are no better or worse than our common peasants and deserve no better treatment (Prof. N. Bose).

The obvious answer, that the question is of not being better or worse, but of a different and distinct cultural trend which should find its place and contribute to the mainstream of Indian culture as a whole, somehow eludes these learned gentlemen. They are probably cross with the ballyhoo that is being made about them.

Some others think exclusively in terms of new roads laid, bridges constructed, community development projects and National Extension Projects and Social Welfare Projects and what not, doing this and that, and paid volunteers going and lecturing, and society ladies going in car on Sundays to distribute milk with an eye checking off the Photographer accompanying the party. In a word, nauseating and foolish and devoid of imagination to an extent which is probably the limit.

A mentality of caste superiority and of having power in hand is rampant among the gentlemen who order these aboriginals and 'untouchables' about.

I have seen what repercussions this is bringing. Apart from political moves of the Jharkhand and Ganatantra Parishad, in social life these gentlemen are literally afraid to go into any village.

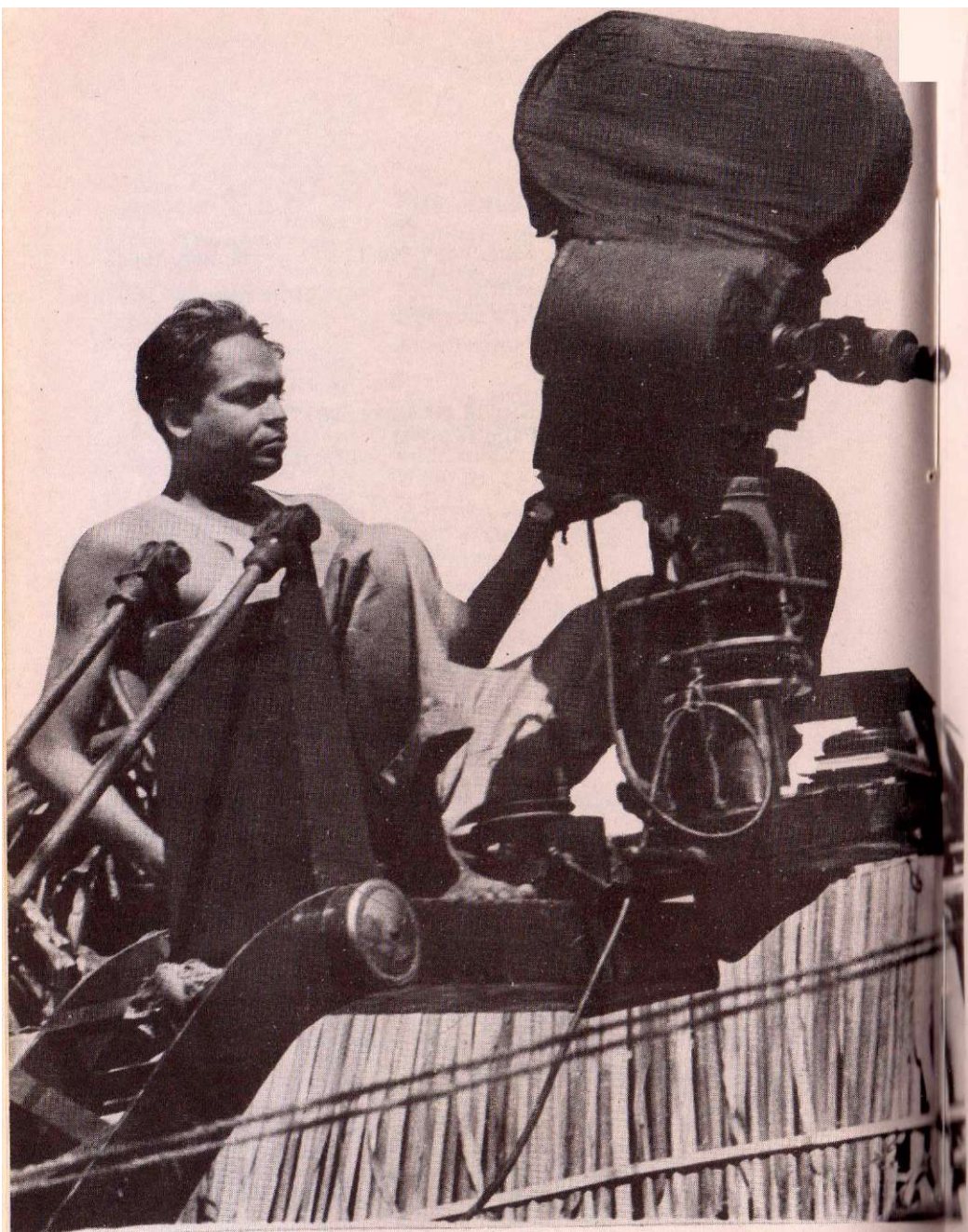
The enlightened attitude is still today almost completely absent. Consciousness is absent also to a larger extent among

Oraons themselves. When they will come to realize and value their own tradition, when the force will emerge from among themselves, they will carry forward their best heritage along with and incorporating the good things of modern society—then their culture will again burst forth, and new dances and songs and art will come into being.

In the meanwhile, all that we can do is stop pitying them.

<u>Article</u>	<u>First Published</u>	<u>Year</u>
1. The Film and I	<i>Montage</i> . Vol-2. No-3.	1963
2. My Coming Into Films	<i>Film Forum</i> , Festival Journal.	July 17th to 20th 1967.
3. Bengali Cinema: Literary Influence	<i>Film Fare</i> .	1965
4. What Ails Indian Film Making	<i>Amrita Bazar Patrika</i> , <i>Sunday Magazine</i>	May, 10, 1970.
5. Some Thoughts on Ajantrik.	<i>Indian Film Review</i> . Page 22-23	December 1958
6. Experimental Cinema	A Lecture in Film & Television Training Institute, Pune.	16th September, 1964
7. Sound in Film	<i>Film Forum</i> , Festival Journal,	July 17th to 20th 1967
8. Music in Indian Cinema and the Epic Approach	<i>Artist</i> , Vol-1. No-1, Page 37-38	January - March, 1963
9. Experiment in Cinema and I.	Unpublished	not known
10. Documentary: the Most Exciting Form of Cinema	A Letter to <i>Indian Oxygen</i> Co.	10.10.1963
11. Cinema and the Subjective Factor	<i>ChitraKalpa</i> , Vol-2. No-1. October Page 5-7	1967
12. Film Making	<i>Chitrabikshan</i> . Page 225-226. Vol-9. No. 4-7	Jan-April 1976
13. Interview (1)	by Kalpana Biswas	1976
14. Interview (2)	Film Miscellany. Film & Television Institute of India. Pune.	1976

- | | | |
|---|--|--------------|
| 15. <i>Nazarin</i> —a review. | <i>Kino</i> . Vol-1. No-1.
Page-23-26. | January 1964 |
| 16. A Book Review:
<i>Theory of Film,</i>
An Attitude to Life
& An Attitude to Art | Unpublished | 1965 |
| 17. About Oraons:
(Chotonagpur) | <i>Ritwik</i> , (October, 1977)
Page 189-201. | 1954-55 |



Born 4th November 1925, Jindabazar, Dhaka.
Passed away 6th February 1976, Calcutta.

1946

Ritwik joins active Marxist politics, in the aftermath of Japanese onslaught, British retreat, famine and communal riots.

1947-1950

Ritwik's stints as short-story writer. He wrote several stories, of which only 14 have been found till date.

1. Akash Gangar Srot Dhore. *Galpabharati*. Page-74-84. 1947
Upstream on the
Milky way
2. Ejahar. Desh. Page-568-570. 1947
The Plaint. 31st July,
3. Ecstasy. *Shanibarar Chithi*. 1948
Page-383-386. February.
4. Raja. *Shanibarar Chithi*. 1948
The King. Page-417-427. September.
5. Parash Pathar. Desh. Page-261-266. 1948
The Touchstone. 11th September.
6. Rupkatha. Agrani. October. 1948.
The Fairy-Tale.
7. Bhuswargo Achanchal. Agrani. Page-26-40. 1948
The Unshakable Earthly
Paradise.
8. Sphatik Patra. Agrani. September-October 1949
The Crystal Ball. Page-10-16.
9. Chokh. Agrani. Page-376-388. 1949
The Eye. Autumn.
10. Comrade. *Phatoa*. Page-46-54. April. 1950
11. Sarak. Mihir Sengupta Collection, not known.
The Road. Page-112-115.
12. Prem. *Madhyanha*. October- 1968
Love. December.
13. Jhankar *Madhyanha*. October- 1968
Resonance. December.
14. Mar. *Madhyanha*. July- **1969**
Beating. September.

1948–1954

Ritwik as IPTA activist/sympathiser participates in the decentralization process of the Party (then banned).

1948

Acted in the revised version of *Navanna* (Dir Bijon Bhattacharya & Shambhu Mitra)—Gananatya.

1949

Formed *Natyachakra* and helped to stage *Nildarpan* (Dir Bijon Bhattacharya, Digin Bandyopadhyay & Sudhi Pradhan).

1st show 'EBR Mansion', 1949.

Ritwik in the role of an old peasant.

Broke away from *Natyachakra* to form *Bahurupee*—involved for 11 months only, in the rehearsal of *Pathik* (Tulsi Lahiri).

Acted in *Kalanka* in the role of a tomy (Dir Bijon Bhattacharya).

1949–50

Acted in the role of a peasant in *Dheu* (Wr Biru Mukhopadhyay).

1st show, Jadavpur Univ. Hostel and City College.

1950

Dramatised *Jwala* from his own report filed in Indian Way (Ed. P.C. Joshi)—'Suicide wave in Calcutta'.

1st show—*Lake View Road (Clandestine)* and *Harish Mukherjee Park*.

Ritwik in the role of a madman.

Participants:

Gita Some

Barin Bose

Panu Pal

Amal Kar

1951

Involved in the drama *Bhanga Bandar* (Wr Panu Pal).

Acted in its shows in 'Rangmahal'.

Participants:

Panu Pal

Kali Bandyopadhyay

Umanath Bhattacharya

Amal Kar

Usha Dutta

Priti Bandyopadhyay

Acted in **Macbeth** (Dir Utpal Dutta) in Shakespeare anniversary year, in its shows in 'Srirangam'.

Ritvik in the role of one of the witches.

1952

Writes **Officer** (inspired by Gogol's *Inspector* General) and acted in its shows (Dir Utpal Dutta).

Participants:

Utpal Dutta

Sobha Sen

Mumtaz Ahmed Khan

Panu Pal

Uinanath Bhattacharya

Samiran Dutta

Nirmal Sarbagna

Kiran Dhar

Dramatised **Bhoter Bhet** (wr Panu Pal).

Participants:

Utpal Dutta

Mumtaz Ahmed Khan

Shantunu Ghosh

Amal Kar

Sunil Dutta

Organized and acted in Poster Drama, Street corner Drama, Extempore skits on the eve of the first General Election.

Acted in **Bisarjan** (Dir Utpal Dutta, later under his own direction).

Participants:

Sobha Sen

Gita Shome

Kali Bandyopadhyay

Umanath Bhattacharya

Samiran Dutta

Kiran Dhar

Nirmal Sarbagna

Amal Kar

Shantunu Ghosh

Ritwik in the role of Raghupati.

IPTA organized **Dalit** (wr dir Ritwik Ghatak)—1st show—Teachers' Conference, Hazra Park.



Participants:
 Parijat Basu
 Mumtaz Ahmed Khan
 Kiran Dhar
 Utpal Dutta
 Samiran Dutta
 Sharitunu Ghosh
 Puruendu Pal
 Umanath Bhattacharya
 Nirmal Sarhagna
 Manoranjan Sengupta
 Aparna Sen
 Dhiren Bhattacharya
 Sohha Sen
 Bharati Sen
 Sita Mukhopadhyay
 Tripti Mitra
 Ritwik in the role of
Kshetu Ghosh.

1953

Dalit voted Best Production in All India IPTA Conference in Bombay:
 Ritwik voted Best Director as well as Best Actor.

1954

Rehearses **Neecher Mahal** (wr Umanath Bhattacharya, inspired by Gorky's *Lower Depths*) sparks off difference of opinion between Ritwik and Southsquad of IPTA.

Participants:

Kali Bandyopadhyay
 Mumtaz Ahmed Khan
Umanath Bhattacharya
 Amal Kar
 Gyanesh Mukhopadhyay
 Sadhana Ray Choudhury
 Nibedita Das
 Surama Bhattacharya

Ritwik prepares for staging **Ispaat** under Central Squad but forced to leave IPTA.

Forms Group *Theatre*—inspired by Stanislavsky's Group Acting.
Stages Sanko (wr dir Ritwik Ghatak) in 'Rangmahal'.

Participants:

Surama Bhattacharya

Umaprasad Maitra

Satindra Bhattacharya

Shailen Ghosh

Sanat

Keshto Mukhopadhyay

Reba Devi

Ritwik in the role of father.

1955

Dramatises *Ha ja ba ra la* (original—Sukumar Ray).

Stages Bisarjan in Bombay.

Participants:

Gita Ghatak

Anish Ghatak

Sita Mukhopadhyay

Ritwik in the role of Raghupati.

Communist Party frames charges against him and strikes out his name from the membership.

1956

Directs *Musafiron Ke Liye* (wr Govind Mali, inspired by Gorky's *Lower Depths*), for Bombay IPTA.—1st show in 'Bharatia Vidya Bhavana'

18th to 19th December.

Participants:

A.K. Hangal

Balraj Sahani

Govind Mali

Viman Dalvi

1957

Stages SankO (Group Theatre).

Rehearsals start for *Vidyasagar*.

Takes up *Streer Patra* (dramatised by Gita Bandyopadhyay).

Participants:

Gita Bandyopadhyay

Satindra Bhattacharya

Chhabi Bose

Sanat

Manju

1965

Translates Brecht's *The Life of Galileo* (22.3.1965)—
first Bengali translation.

1967–68

Translates Brecht's *Caucasian Chalk Circle*.

1969

Writes *Sei Meve* (10–14.7.1969) while confined in Mental hospital—
stages the play there with doctors & patients, as participants.

1974

Jwalanta (wr dir Ritwik Ghatak)—1st show 'Academy of Fine Arts'
24.8.1975.

<i>Plays</i>	<i>First Published</i>	<i>Year</i>
1. Kalo Sayor. The Dark Lake.	not known	1948–50
2. Jwala. Agony.	<i>Jatiya Sahitya Parishad.</i> (1968)	1950
3. Dalil. Document.	Gananatya— <i>New</i> Masses <i>Publications.</i>	1952
4. Sanko The Wooden Bridge.	Abhinav Darpan, July–Aug. Page–9–46 (1968).	1954
5. The Life of Galileo. Translation.	<i>Jativa Sahitva Parishad.</i> 1st Baisakh. (1965)	22.3.1965
6. Caucasian Chalk Circle. Translation.	Not known	1967–68
7. Sei Meve. That Girl.	Abhinav Darpan. July–Aug. (1969) Page–236–250.	10–14.7.1969
8. Jwalanta. Aflame.	Bahurupi. Natyapatra. Sept. (1976) Page–229–245.	1974

Unfinished Writings

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| i. Prachin.
The Ages Past. | 10th October. 1962. |
| 2. Utkat.
Grotesque. | Year not known. |

1948 onwards: Ritwik as an activist in the Film movement.

1948

Takes the leading role in the activities of Cine Technicians' Association of Bengal (CTAB).

1949

Participates in preparing a Memorandum on the state of the film-industry in West Bengal for submission to the Film Enquiry Committee. Principal demand: nationalisation of film-industry.

1952

Technicians' Studio founded by retrenched members of the closed Rupasree Studio in the premises of the erstwhile Kali Films Studio.

Ritwik was an active participant in the whole process, refused to be a share holder.

1961 (July 4)

Active participation in forming Cine Technicians' & Workers' Union of West Bengal (CTWUJ—with breakaway faction of CTAB.

1975

Forms CUNIC (Co-operative Union of New Indian Cinema) in Bombay to help the exhibition of serious Indian Films.

1949

Ritwik Ghatak worked as assistant director and as an actor in Manoj Bhattacharya's film *Tathapi*.

1951

In Nemai Ghosh's *Chhinnamul* he worked as an actor as well as assistant in direction.



Arup Katha 1951-52 Bedeni

Incomplete

Production	: Sunil Roy
Story elaboration,	: Ritwik Ghatak
Screenplay, direction	
Story	: Tarashankar Bandyopadhyay
Cinematography	: Sachin Dasgupta

Cast

Shapla	ProbhaDevi
Chiti	: Ketaki Devi
Dhana	: Abhi Bhattacharya
Pingla	: Sobha Sen
Sardar	: Maharshi Manoranjan Bhattacharya
Gokhree	: Mita Chattopadhyay
others	Bijon Bhattacharya
	Mumtaz Ahmed Khan
	Parijat Bose

Ritwik Ghatak took over the direction of this film from Sri Nirmal De. Where after he re-wrote the screenplay, made a few important changes in the cast. Bijon Bhattacharya replaced Kanu Bandyopadhyay and Maharshi Manoranjan Bhattacharya replaced Sisir Batabyal. The film was renamed 'Arup Katha'. Twenty days of film shooting followed at Bolpur and then on the banks of river Subarna Rekha at Ghatshila. The second half of the shooting had to be discarded because of technical failure of equipment, resulting in abandonment of the project.



Nagarik 1952-53 The Citizen

125 minutes

Released on 20.9.77 to 6.10.77 at New Empire (Calcutta)

Production

Film Guild

Promade Sengupta

Bhupati Nandi

Ritwik Ghatak

Ritwik Ghatak

Story, screenplay,
direction

Cinematography

Ramananda.Sengupta

Editing

Ramesh Joshi

Music

Hariprasanna Das

Commentary

Ritwik Ghatak

Cast

Mother	Probha Devi
Sita	Sobha Sen
Uma	Ketaki Devi
Shefali	Gita Shome
Ramu	Satindra Bhattacharya
Sagar	Ajit Bandyopadhyay
Father	Kali Bandyopadhyay
Jatin	Keshto Mukhopadhyay
Land Lord	Gangapada Basu
Pintoo	Sriman Pintoo
Violinist	Parijat Bose
Sushanta	Mumtaz Ahmed Khan
others	Anil Chattopadhyay
	Umanath Bhattacharya
	Anil Ghosh

The film never got a public release during his lifetime. Nearly a year after he passed away, it was discovered that the original negative (nitrate base) was lost and out of the few prints made (in 1953) only one could be traced and that too had been ravaged to an extent by time.



Adivasion Ka Jiban Srot 1955

Life of the Adivasis

Hindi, Documentary
15 minutes

Production	: Government of Bihar
Screenplay, direction	: Ritwik Ghatak
Film Unit	: Aurora Cinema Company

Bihar Ke Darshaniya Sthan 1955

Historic places in Bihar

Hindi, Documentary
16 minutes

Production	: Government of Bihar
Screenplay, direction	: Ritwik Ghatak
Film Unit	: Aurora Cinema Company

Oraon 1957

This is a preparatory test film on the life of the Adivasis of Ranchi region and on the Oraons of Rani Khatanga village.



Ajantrik 1957-58 Pathetic Fallacy

120 minutes

Released on 23.5.58 to 26.6.58 at Bina. Basusree. Anjan, Surasree. Alochhaya (Calcutta).

Production

L.B. Films International

Story elaboration,
screenplay, direction

Ritwik Ghatak

Story

Subodh Ghosh

Cinematography

Dinen Gupta

Editing

Ramesh Joshi

Music

Ali Akbar Khan

Dance & Folk Songs

Adivasis of Dhumkuria, Ranchi.

And Oraons of Rani Khatanga
Village.

Publicity Layouts

Khaled Choudhury

Cast

Jagaddal	: Chevrolet (1920 Model)
Bimal	: Kali Bandyopadhyay
Prasadi Kujur	: Jhurni
Hashi	: Kajal Chattopadhyay
Sultan	: Sriman Deepak
Gour	: Gyanesh Mukhopadhyay
Bulaki	: Keshto Mukhopadhyay Sita Mukhopadhyay
Mama	: Gangapada Basu
Tarani	: Satindra Bhattacharya
Tulsi	: Tulsi Chakrabarty
Bachan Singh	: Pyara Singh Luthar Tiga



Bari Theke Paliye 1959 Run Away

124 minutes.

Released on 24.7.59-20.8.59 at Minar, Bijoli, Chhabighar (Calcutta).

Production	: L.B. Films International
Story elaboration, screenplay, direction	: Ritwik Ghatak
Story	: Shibram Chakrabarty
Cinematography	: Dinen Gupta
Editing	: Ramesh Joshi
Music	: Salil Choudhury
Publicity Layouts	: Khaled Choudhury

Cast

Haridas	: Kali Bandyopadhyay
Father	: GyaneshMukhopadhyay
Mother	: Padma Devi
Kanchan	: Param Bhattarak Lahiri
Magician	: Keshto Mukhopadhyay
Traffic Policeman	: JaharRay
Chandan	: Sriman Deepak
Mini's Father	: Satindra Bhattacharya
Feriwala	: Nripati Chattopadhyay
Mini	: Krishna Jaya
Mini's Mother	: Niti Pandit
Nanda	: Shailen Ghosh
others	: Mohammed Israel Mani Srimani Gobinda Chattopadhyay



K a t o A j a n a r e 1959

Incomplete

Production	: MihirLaw
Screenplay, direction	: Ritwik Ghatak
Story	: Shankar
Cinematography	: Dilip Ranjan Mukhopadhyay
Editing	: RameshJoshi

Cast

Shankar	: Anil Chattopadhyay
Rempini	: Chhabi Biswas
Barwell	: Kali Bandyopadhyay
Dutch Sailor	: Utpal Dutta
others	Asim Kumar
	Karuna Bandyopadhyay
	Gita De

The film shooting spanned eighteen to twenty days of outdoors in and around the High Court and indoors in the Technician's Studio. This yielded seven reels of edited film.



Meghe Dhaka Tara i960 The Cloud-Capped Star

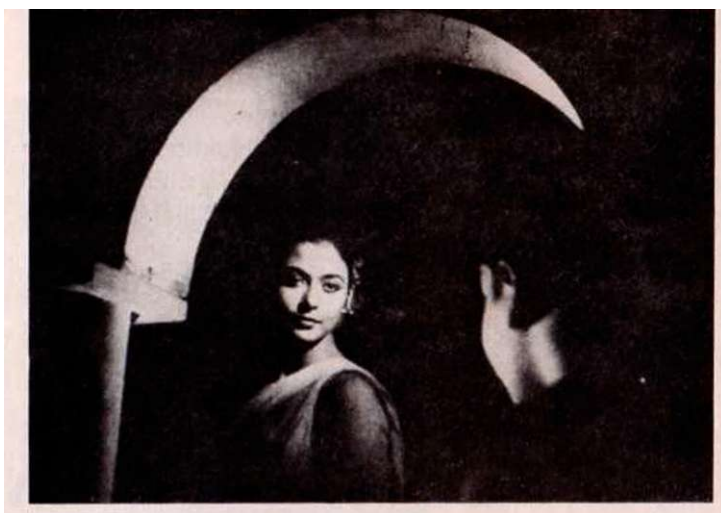
126 minutes.

Released on 14.4.60 to 9.6.60 at Sree, Prachi, Indira (Calcutta).

Production	: Chitrakalpa
Story elaboration, screenplay, direction	: Ritwik Ghatak
Story	: Shaktipada Rajguru
Cinematography	: Dinen Gupta
Editing	: RameshJoshi
Music	: Jyotirindra Maitra
Playback Singers	: Debarata Biswas, A.T. Kanan, Gita Ghatak, Ranen Ray Choudhury

Cast

Nita	:	Supriya Choudhury
Shankar	:	Anil Chattopadhyay
Haran Master (Father)	:	Bijon Bhattacharya
Mother	:	Gita De
Sanat	:	Niranjana Ray
Mantu	:	Dwij Bhawal
Gita	:	Gita Ghatak
Banshi Dutta	:	Gyanesh Mukhopadhyay
Baul	:	Ranen Ray Choudhury
others	:	Satindra Bhattacharya



Komal Gandhar 1961

133 minutes,

Released on 31.3.61 at Radha, Purna. Lotus, Purabi (Calcutta).

Production	: Chitrakalpa
Story, screenplay.	: Ritwik Ghatak
direction	
Cinematography	Dilip Ranjan Mukhopadhyay
Editing	Ramesh Joshi
Music	Jyotirindra Maitra
Playback Singers	Debabrata Biswas
	Bijon Bhattacharya
	Hemanga Biswas
	Priti Bandyopadhyay
	Mantu Ghosh

Films

Cast

Anasua
Jaya
Shanta
Bhrigu
Rishi
Shibnath
Gagan
Speaker
Prabhat
Debu Bose
others

Supriya Choudhury
Chitra Mondol
Gita De
Abanish Bandyopadhyay
Anil Chattopadhyay
Satindra Bhattacharya
Bijon Bhattacharya
Mani Srimani
Satyabrata Chattopadhyay
Gyanesh Mukhopadhyay
Debabrata Biswas



SubarnaRekha 1962

139 minutes.

Released on 1.10.1965 at Basusree. Bina, Lotus (Calcutta).

Production
Story elaboration,
screenplay, direction
Original Story
Cinematography
Editing

J.J. Films Corporation
Ritwik Ghatak

Radheshyam Jhunjunwala
Dilip Ranjan Mukhopadhyay
Ramesh Joshi
Arati Mukhopadhyay
Ranen Ray Choudhury
Khaled Choudhury

Playback Singers

Publicity Layouts

Cast

Ishwar Chakrabarty	Abhi Bhattacharya
Haraprasad	Bijon Bhattacharya
Little Sita	Indrani Chakrabarty
Koushalya (Bagdi Bou)	Gita De
Little Abhiram	Sriman Tarun
Baul	Ranen Ray Choudhury
Hari Babu	Abanish Bandyopadhyay
Manager	Radha Govinda Ghosh
Music Teacher	Ritwik Ghatak
Sita	Madhabi Mukhopadhyay
Abhiram	Satindra Bhattacharya
Mukherjee (Foreman)	Jahar Ray
Akhil Babu	Umanath Bhattacharya
Kajal Didi	Sita Mukhopadhyay
Rambilas	Pitambar
Gurudev	Arun Choudhury
Benimadhab	Shyamal Ghoshal
Binu	Sriman Ashok Bhattacharya

Scissors 1962

Ad Film

Production	: Imperial Tobacco Company
Direction	: Ritwik Ghatak
Cinematography	: Mahendra Kumar

The film was made to raise funds for the completion of the film Suburnu Rekha.

Ustad Alauddin Khan .1963

Documentary

Ritwik Ghatak wrote screenplay of this film and the shooting of the film was done under his direction.



Bagalar Bang-a Darshan 1964

Incomplete

Financer	: Ramen Maheswari
Story, Screenplay, direction	: Ritwik Ghatak
Cinematography	: Dilip Ranjan Mukhopadhyay
Editing	: Ramesh Joshi
Music	: Hriday Ranjan Kushari
Playback Singer	: Pratima Barua

Cast

Bagala	: Sunil Bhattacharya
KanchanMala	: Indrani Mukhopadhyay
others	Padma Devi
	Renuka Roy
	Jahar Roy
	Mumtaz Ahmed Khan
	Keshito Mukhopadhyay
	Tarun Ghosh
	Sriman Deepak



Fear 1965

Hindi

Short Film

Production	: Film & Television Training Institute
Story, script, music, direction	: Ritwik Ghatak
Cinematography	: LalJaswani
Editor	: Vishram Revankar

Cast

The Science Student	: SubhashGhai
His Wife	: Sudha Rani
The Voluptuous Girl	: Urvashi Dutta
The Rich Man	: Govardhan Sharma
The Village Girl	: PratimaNaik
The Quiet Man	: C. Asrani
The Musician	: S. Shah
The Pick-Pocket	: S. Desai
The Scientist	: V.K. Malhotra
The Colonel	: UmaraniA
The Captain	: Ranjit Kant
The Drunkard	: Nooruddin

This is a student exercise film for the student of acting course 1964-65.



Rendezvous 1965

Hindi
Short film

Production	:	Film & Television Training Institute, Pune.
Direction	:	Rajendra Nath Shukla
Cinematography	:	Amarjeet
Music	:	Ramkadam
Editing	:	Vikram Rajput

Cast

Sudharani Sharma
S. Dinkar
Govardhan Lai

Diploma film made under Ritwik Ghatak's supervision.



Scientists of Tomorrow 1967

Documentary

Production	: Films Division
Story, screenplay, music, direction	: Ritwik Ghatak
Cinematography	: Amarjeet
Editing	: RameshJoshi
Commentary	: Ritwik Ghatak
Voice	: Vijay Menon



Ranger Golam 1968

Incomplete

Production, story,
screenplay, direction
Cinematography

: Ritwik Ghatak

: Mahendra Kumar

Cast

Anil Chattopadhyay
Sita Devi
Jahar Ray
Sarbani
Mani Srimani

The shooting proceeded rapidly for a week, completing nearly one-fourth of the film.

Subsequently Ritwik Ghatak had to abandon the film by adverse circumstances.



Puruliar Chhou Nritya 1970 Chhou Dance of Purulia

Documentary

Production
Screenplay, direction
Cinematography

Sumana Films
Ritwik Ghatak
Dhrubajyoti Basu
Dipak Basu
Dipal Das
Ramesh Joshi
Bahadur Khan
Ritwik Ghatak

Editing
Music
Commentary



Amar Lenin 1970

My Lenin

Documentary
20 minutes

Production	: Sumana Films
Screenplay, direction	: Ritwik Ghatak
Cinematography	: Dhruvajyoti Basu
Music	: Jyotirindra Maitra
Editor	: Ramesh Joshi
Playback Singers	: Binoy Roy Priti Bandyopadhyay Mantu Ghosh Anima Dasgupta Reba Ray Choudhury

Cast

: Arun Kumar

Screening of this film was banned within the country at that time. It was however, allowed screening in the U S S R. Later it was given permission within the country for private screenings only.



YiehKiun 1970
The Question

Hindi
Documentary

Production
Screenplay, direction
Cinematography
Editing
Music
Playback singers

Chitra Prarthana
Ritwik Ghatak
Mahendra Kumar
Amarlesh Sikdar
Kamalesh Maitra
Priti Bandyopadhyay
Mantu Ghosh
Bachhu Rahman

Cast

Arun Kumar
Atanu Roy
Manas Dey
Radha Govinda Ghosh
Bula Sengupta

Durbar Gati Padma 1971

There flows Padma, the Mother

Short film
Partly coloured

Production	: Trio Films
Story, screenplay, direction	: Ritwik Ghatak

Cast:
: Biswajit Chattopadhyay



Indira Gandhi 1972

Documentary
Incomplete

Financer	: Ram Das
Screenplay, direction	: Ritwik Ghatak
Cinematography	: A.K. Goorha Mahendra Kumar

The shooting of the film was conducted in Hyderabad and also at the historical meeting with Sheikh Mujibar Rahman, Calcutta.

Later the project was abandoned.



Titas Ekti Nadir Nam 1973

A River Called Titas

159 minutes

Released on 27.7.73 at Dhaka—Madhumita, Gulistan, Lion, Jonaki, Moon. Diana. At Naraingunj—Hansa, Gulshan. At Chittagong—Jalsa, Cinema Palace, Lion (Bangladesh).

Production
Distribution
Music theme,
screenplay, direction
Story
Cinematography
Editing
Music
Key play-back singer
Playback singers

Purba Pran Katha Chitra
Phalguni Katha Chitra
Ritwik Ghatak

Advaita Malla Barman
Baby Islam
Basheer Hussain
Bahadur Khan
Dheeraj Uddin Phakir
Rathindranath Ray
Neena Hamid
Abeda Sultana
Dharmeedan Barua

Films

Cast

Basanti	: RosySamad
Rajar Jhi	: Kabari Choudhury
Basanti's Mother	: Roushan Jamil
Munglee	: Rani Sarkar
Udaytara	: Sufia Rustam
Moral Girini	: Banani Choudhury
Kishore	: PrabirMitra
Subla	: Chand
Ramprasad & Kader Mian	: Golam Mustafa
TilakChand	: Ritwik Ghatak
Nibaran Kundu	: Fakrul Hasan Bairagi
Ananta	: Shafikul Islam
Basanti's Father	: M.A. Khair
Moral	: Narain Chakrabarty
Magan Sardar	: Sirajul Islam



Jukti Takko Ar Gappo 1974

Argument and a story

Released on 30.9.77 to 13.10.77 at Minar, Bijoli.
Chhabighar.(Calcutta)

Production
Story, scenario, music
direction, executive producer
Cinematography
Editing
Dance Choreography
Publicity Layouts
Playback singers

Rit Chitra.
Ritwik Ghatak

Baby Islam
Amalesh Sikdar
Shambhu Bhattacharya
Khaled Choudhury
Debabrata Biswas
Ranen Ray Choudhury
Arati Mukhopadhyay
Binapani Roy Choudhury

Films

Cast

Nilkantho	: Ritwik Ghatak
Durga	: Tripti Mitra
Bangabala	: Shaonli Mitra
Jagannath Bhattacharya	: Bijon Bhattacharya
Nachiketa	: Saugata Barman
Panchanan Ustad	: GyaneshMukhopadhyay
Naxalite Leader	: Ananya Ray
Police Inspector	: Shyamal Ghoshal
Satya	: Ritaban Ghatak
others	: Utpal Dutta
	Jahar Ray
	Govinda Chakrabarty



Ramkinkar 1975

Documentary
16mm Colour
Incomplete

Financial Assistance	: Mohan Biswas
Production, screenplay, direction	: Ritwik Ghatak
Cinematography	: Nirmal Sunil Jana

Apart from a few scenes the film was shot and roughly edited.
The back ground sound track was on the point of being taken u
just before he passed away.

Screenplay

1.	Raja (Hindi)	1956
2.	Amrita Kumbher Sandhane	1957
3.	Akal Basanta	1957
4.	Arjan Sardar	1958
5.	Balidan	1962
6.	Aranyak	1963
7.	Nakshi Kanthar Math	1963
8.	Elephant Taming in Gouripur	1963
9.	Shyam Se Neha Lagaiye (Bhojpuri)	1964
10.	Janmabhumi (Pandit Mashai)	1965
11.	Chaturanga	1966
12.	Hirer Prajapati	1966
13.	Sansar Simante	1968
14.	Echoes from Vietnam in Bengal	1968
15.	Kumar Sambhaber Ashtam Swargo	1969
16.	Sat Lahari	
17.	Natun Phasal	
18.	Ajay and Gabroo	
19.	Those forgotten ones	
20.	Shey Bishnupriya	1974
21.	Mannequin	1974
22.	Hath	
23.	Buddhu Bhutum (Princess Kalabati)	1975
24.	Lajja	1975

Ritwik Ghatak wrote screenplays for the following films.

<i>Film</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Director</i>
1. Madhumati	1955 Hindi	Bimal Roy
2. Musafir	1955 Hindi	Hrishikesh Mukhopadhyay
3. Swaralipi	1961	Asit Sen
4. Kumari Mon ~	1962	Chitra Rath
5. Dwiper Nam Tiyarang	1962	Guru Bagchi
6. Raj Kanya	1962	Sunil Bandyopadhyay

Articles Interviews Lectures

	<u>First Published</u>	<u>Year</u>
1. A New Chapter in Acting. <i>Bengali</i>	<i>Chalachhitra</i> . Autumn Issue. Page-93-101.	1950
2. A Draft On Cultural Line. <i>Bengali</i>	<i>Indian Peoples' Theatre Association</i> .	1.6.51
3. A Film Festival in Calcutta: Soviet Film <i>Grand Concert: Bicycle Thief. Bengali</i> .	<i>Parichay</i> . March. 21st Year. Vol-2. No-3. Page-70-79.	1952
4. Soviet Film in Calcutta. <i>Bengali</i> .	<i>Parichay</i> . November. 24th Year. No-5. Page-526, 517.	1954
5. About Oraons (Chotonagpur).	<i>Ritwik</i> . (October. 1977) Page-189-201	1954-55
6. Some Thoughts On <i>Ajantrik</i> .	<i>Indian Film Review</i> . Page-22-23.	December 1958
7. One Long Boundary Wall. <i>Bengali</i> .	<i>Cluilachhilra</i> Annual Number. Page-117-119.	1959
8. Various Weapon: Editing. <i>Bengali</i> .	<i>Ritwik</i> . (October. 1977) Page-183-187.	not known
9. Speech About Cinema Artists Of Bengal. <i>Bengali</i> .	<i>Chitrabikshan</i> . (Jan-April. 1976)	1958-60.
10. A Book Review: <i>Theory of Film</i>	<i>Indian Film Culture</i> . Vol-1. No-1. Page-40-44.	April-June. 1962
11. Music In Indian Cinema And The Epic Approach.	<i>Artist</i> . January-March. Vol-1. No-1. Page-37-38.	1963.
12. An Interview On Film Script. <i>Bengali</i> .	<i>Chalachhitra</i> . Autumn, Vol-3. Page-47-50.	1963,
13. Human Society, Our Tradition. Film Making and my Efforts. <i>Bengali</i> .	<i>Chalachhitra</i> . Autumn Issue.	1963.

14. Art and Integrity. *Dainik Basumati*, 1963.
Bengali, Autumn Issue.
15. Editorial. *Artist*, July-September. 1963
Vol-1. No.-3.
16. *Nazarin* and Louis Bunuel. *Chalachhitra*, Winter. 1963.
Bengali. Page-41-44.
17. The Film and I. Montage. Vol-2. No-3. 1963
18. *Nazarin*—a review Kino. Vol-1. No-1. January 1964
Page-23-26.
19. Experimental Cinema. *Amrita*. Autumn Issue. 1964
Bengali.
20. The Mother Land and the Artist's Duty. *Parichay*. Autumn Issue. 1964
Bengali.
21. Assessing a Film. *Chalachhitra*. Autumn 1964
Bengali. Issue. Page-18-20.
22. Experimental Cinema. Lecture. *Film and* 16th Sept.
Television Training 1964
Institute.
23. On Komal Gdnndhar *Chitrapat*. Vol-1. No-1 1965
Bengali. Page-23-24.
24. The Director's Message *Chitrakalpa*. Summer 1965
in Cinema *Bengali*. Issue. Vol-1. No.-1.
25. Understanding Cinema. *Angik*. Summer Issue. 1965
Bengali.
26. A Book Review: 1965
Theory of Film.
An Attitude To Life & An
attitude to Art.
27. It is Not Possible To Statement. *Jugantar*. 13.8.1965
Accept What The
Box-Office Demands.
Bengali.
28. The Past & Present *Chalachhitra* October 1965
of Bengali Films: Page-24-25.
Interview. Bengali,

29. A Book Review: *Theory of Film, Nature of Film.* Lecture. *F.T.I.I.* of Pune. 30.9.1965
30. Bengali Cinema *Film Fare.* 1965
31. Sound in Film. *Bengali, Parichay.* Chatushkala Issue. 35th Year. 1965
No-6. Page-625-631.
32. Plays and the Present Age *latiya Sahitya Parishad.* 12.4.1966
Bengali, May, (1966) Page-9-12.
33. On Subarna Rekha Chitrapat. August 1966
Bengali. Vol-2. No-2.
Page-26-27.
34. My Film. *Bengali.* Film. Autumn Issue. 1966
35. Art. Cinema & the *Ananda Bazar Patrika.* 1966
Future. *Bengali.* Golden Jubilee Issue.
36. Third International Chitrakalpa. Vol-1. No-4. Winter 1966
Film Festival in India. Page-13-16.
Bengali.
37. Experiment in Cinema Unpublished. not known
and I.
38. The Future of Film. Movie Montage. 1967
Bengali. Vol-1. No-1.
Page-1.
39. My Coming Into Films. *Film Forum.* Festival 1967
Souvenir. July 17th to 20th
40. Sound in Film. *Film Forum.* Festival 1967
Souvenir. July 17th-20th.
41. From a Statement. Chitrayan. Page-34. 1967.
Bengali, (1977 August.)
- 12 What is the True Form of Cinema? *Bengali.* Lecture. 29.9.1967
- 13 Experimental Film and I. *Bengali.* *Chitrabikshan.* October. 1967
- M Cinema and the *Chitrakalpa.* October. 1967
subjective Factor. Vol-2. No. 1. Page-5-7
- I i flunking About Cinema. Movie Montage. Special 1967
Bengali, Issue.
Vol-1. No-2.
Page-49-53

46. Interview. *Bengali.* Movie Montage. 1967
Vol-1. No-2.
Page-54-58
- 47 Documentary Film. *Bengali,* *Sahitya Patra.* Sep-Nov. 1967
Issue. Page-117-121
- 48 The Position of Cinema in the Society. *Bengali.* Movie Montage. 1967
Vol-1. No-3.
Page-3-4
49. Bengali Society and Bengali Cinema. *Bengali.* *Madhyanya.* Oct-Dec. 1967
Issue. Vol-2. No-3.
Page-147-150.
- 50 Filmic Rhythm and Structure. *Bengali.* *Chalachhitra.* Sept.-Dec. 1967
Issue. Page-9-10.
- 51 Prognosis for Today's Cinema. *Bengali,* *Desh.* December Issue. 1967
Vol-35. No-9.
Page-885-886
- 52 The Socalled Crisis in Bengali Cinema. *Bengali.* *A bhinay Darpan.* 1968
May-June Issue.
Page-32-34.
- 53 Some Stray Thoughts Some Perceptions. *Bengali.* *Ritwik.* (October. 1977) 1968
Page-5-10.
- 54 The Film I Want To Make About Vietnam. *Bengali.* *West Bengal Youth Festival.* Commemorative Volume. 1968
- 55 Dance in Cinema. *Bengali.* *Nupur Dance Academy,* 1968
Souvenir.
56. On the People's Theatre Movement. *Bengali.* *Abhinay Darpan.* 1969
May-June Issue.
Page-7-8,2.
57. If I Could Make Films Again. *Bengali.* *An tarjatik Angik.* 1969
58. Obscenity and Films. *Bengali,* *Assam Bani Patrika.* 12.12.1969
59. The Present and Future of Indian Film Making. *Bengali.* *Abhinay.* March-April 1970
Issue. Vol-1. No-2 & 3.
Page-138-148: 201-204.
60. Interview: by Ajay Basu. *Bengali.* *Abhinay,* May Issue. 1970
Vol-1. No.-4.

61. What Ails Indian Film Making. *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, May 10th. 1970
Sunday Magazine.
62. Interview. Bengali, Chitrabhash. July 1970
Page-9-10
63. Our Beloved Ganga-da: *Ganga Pada Basu* 3rd Jan.
The Quiet Man. *Bengali, Commemorative volume*. 1972
Page-44-48.
64. If There Be Any One Person In India Who Comprehends The Film Medium, Then He Is Satyajit Ray. *Bengali, Cine Technique*. March 1972
Issue.
65. Interview. *Bengali*, Chatrapat. No-9. 1972
Page-37-38.
66. Thoughts About *Ajantrik*. *Bengali, Antarjatic Angik*. not known
Winter-Spring Issue. (1973) Page-55-60.
67. Interview: *Titas and Others. Bengali*. 1973
by Tulu Das.
68. Ritwik Ghatak: *Chitrabikshan*. 1973
An Interview. *Bengali*. August-September. 6th
Year. No-11-12.
69. Brecht and Ourselves. *Bengali, Natyachinta*. Vol-2. 1973
Page-9.
70. An Interview *Bengali*, by Muhammed Khashru. 13.5.1974
Dhrupadi. Vol-4. 14th April (1977)
Page-148-169.
71. People I Have Seen Both September 1974
The Bengal. *Bengali*.
72. Dialectics In Films. *Amrita*. 1974
Bengali.
73. My Views. *Bengali*. *Amrita*. 1974
- 7-1 Two Aspects: *Chalachhitra*. Autumn 1974
The Mind: Day Dreams: Issue.
The Eye: Movement In Page-14-23.
Film. *Bengali*.

75. Face to Face with Ritwik *Chitrabikshan*. 1974
Ghatak. *Bengali*, September.
76. Bijon Bhattacharya: *Natyadarpan* Vol-1. No-1. May 1975
Giver of New Life. Page-13-15
Bengali,
77. An Interview. *Bengali*. by Prabir Sen. *Jalim* 1975
Singh's Journal.
(4.9.1976-12.4.1977).
78. Recent Plays. *Bengali*, *Moumachi*. 1975
79. Let There Be Sound. *Chitrabikshan*. Jan-April 1976
Issue. Page-216.
80. Film Making. *Chitrabikshan*. Jan-April 1976
Issue. Page-225-226.
81. Symbol. *Bengali*, *Shabda*. not known
82. The Emergency: *Chitrabikshan*. 1975
Ritwik Ghatak's Works (July-Sept. 1977) 10th
At The Censor's Mercy. Year. No-10-12.
Page-9-10.
83. On Drama. *Bengali*. *Agyatabas*. August. 1976
No-17. Page-49-50.
84. Cinema. Literature and *Chitrabikshan*. 1976
My Films. *Bengali*. November.
85. *La Dolce Vita* *Chitrapat*. Special Issue. 1976
and Fellini. *Bengali*,
86. On Bergman. *Bengali*, *Chitrapat*. Special Issue. 1976
87. My Thoughts On *F.F.S.I.* Ritwik 1976
Cinema. Retrospective Souvenir.
88. What It Means to Make *Films In India*. *Bengali*. not known
89. An Interview. by Kalpana Biswas. 1976
- 90- An Interview. *Film Miscellany*. 1976
91. An Interview. *Swarabarna*
92. Excerpt of an Article. *Movie Montage*. No-18. November
Bengali, Page-57 1975
93. On Memory of *Pramathesh Barooah* not known
Bengali,

Important Letters

1. To S. Mukherjee. *Filmisthan Studio*. Bombay. 10th April 1956
2. To the P R. Officer. *Indian Oxygen Co.* 10.10.1963
(Documentary: The Most Exciting Form of Cinema)
3. To the Principal *Film & Television Training Institute*. Pune. 10th June 1965
(Memorandum Concerning Integrated Course of Direction)
4. To the Principal. *Film & Television Training Institute*. Pune. 6.8.1965

This Book is a
representative volume of
Ritwik Ghatak's writings
on cinema.

These articles were
originally written in
English.

In addition to the text the
book offers an exhaustive
filmography, production
stills, and details of his
involvement with IPTA, as
well as a list of his written
works.

RITWIK GHATAK/CINEMA AND I